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## THE NEEDLE HAS LANDED



## BRING ON THE BIG DOGS

I've gotten it into my head that I want a Great Dane. I haven't owned a dog in about 10 years but once you've had a dog, all the time that you haven't got one, there's a big hole in your life where that dog used to be. It's either a Great Dane or an Irish Wolfhound, but I'm erring on the side of the Dane due to its non-abundance of hair. I've always had hairy dogs in the past and I just don't have the time for both hair maintenance and exercise any more. This seems like sound logic to me.

I've told a fair few people about this intention and they all say the same sort of lame-ass thing: "it's a big responsibility to take on a dog like that", "they don't live very long you know", "they're very clumsy"... The list goes on. All from people who, to the best of my knowledge, have never actually owned a Great Dane for themselves. I don't much like little dogs and I certainly don't want one that I can carry around like a book.

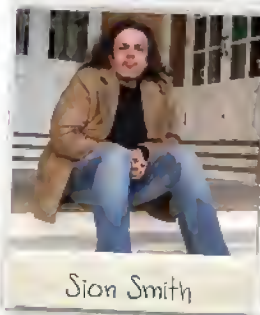
This is pretty much basically the same conversation that I've been having about my intended back-piece, with a few subtle differences obviously, but both will go ahead as planned. Both have been thought about too long and too hard to be changing my mind now.

Both of these pose me some little problems though. Do I get the dog as a puppy or do I get one from a rescue centre? The odds on finding a Dane at a rescue centre are probably slim - especially a young one (preferably without learning difficulties!). The back piece has a different set of problems - not so much the 'what', as that's all taken care of. No, that little dilemma is filed under "who". It's not like I can't name 20 artists off the top of my head who I would be totally happy to hand it

over to, but rather which do I choose to put their own artistic slant on the concept. Each come with their own set of positives and thankfully no negatives at all bar the distance involved and that age old nugget - time.

I think I shall give both a few months grace while I chew it over some more. The dog mostly because by the time March/April comes around, it should have stopped raining/snowing/being -7° and he can be trained normally. The back-piece? So as I can start crossing artists off my shortlist with some degree of confidence that they'll be leaving my list for all the right reasons. Likewise, it won't be so cold to sleep with no covers on. There's nothing worse than waking up being stuck to the sheet - apart from maybe waking up stuck to a sheet with a big dog lying next to you that wants some food.

Still, as my mother would say, "if that's all you've got to worry about, life must be pretty good."



Keep up to date with everything tattoo!  
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Counting Charles Bukowski, Jim Morrison, and Frank Zappa amongst his associates, the son of Artie Shaw and Doris Dowling was left no option other than to make his life anything less than unique...

## FREE SUPPLEMENT

This month we press the rewind button on 2010 and take a look back at the most intense year of Tattoo Conventions we have ever experienced. Enjoy!

 [www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine](http://www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine)



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# FALLOUT

Seen an interesting clipping in the press? Got something that you'd like reviewed or featured? Got some spare chocolate or beer? Send them to: Skin Deep, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ OR EMAIL: [editor@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:editor@skindeep.co.uk)

## COME OUT & PLAY

Photographer and Tattooed Vixen Cindy Frey recently released **Come and Play With Us** – a collection of photographs that captures the contradiction of the innocence of children and horror. Using facebook to find the children, Frey was inundated to the point that she eventually had to start turning people away from the project.



"I love children a lot, they are so innocent, so pure and I love horror, thrillers, dark stuff. I got the idea to bring out a book with only creepy children portraits. On facebook, I announced I needed to find nice kids and surprisingly that was a huge success – the feedback was enormous. In the end I couldn't accept any more.

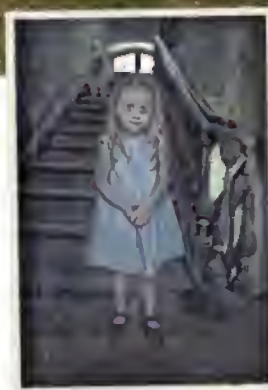
The result of this was a nice variation of kids and personalities. I used autistic kids, a physically disable boy, a girl with a tumour and kids of different nationalities – my intention was to give every child a chance to get into the picture. Thanks to the enthusiastic children and parents, this project is the nicest one I have ever done"

The launch for the book

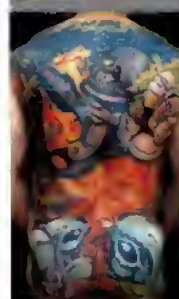


took place on Hallowe'en with all the children present, a bouncy castle and a drumming band laying the death march.

Come and Play with us is reviewed on page 79. To get yourself a copy of the book, check in at [cindyfrey.com](http://cindyfrey.com). Get your eyes back here next issue for a feature interview of mammoth proportions. I think I'm in love. It was the bouncy castle that did it.



### MOVERS AND SHAKERS



**Viva La Revolution!** The inimitable Jesse Smith continues to expand his awe inspiring dominance of the world – this month, he releases his first poster print for sale. It features one of the first big pieces where "the client had given me pretty much 100% artistic freedom", and it's a killer! To put the whole item in context, you can read the backstory and order copies from his site over at [www.jesssmithtattoos.com](http://www.jesssmithtattoos.com)

**Northern Soul are on the move**, but fear not those of you who aren't so good without a SatNav – the new studio is just ten minutes away from the old one. By the time you read this, doors will be open and big enough to house more customers than ever before.

**Seventh Circle Artworks** are proud to announce we now have our first official outlet in London! ALIENATE DESIGN in Camden, London are now stocking our jewellery. They are at 33a Stables Market, Chalk Farm Road, Camden, NW1 8AH and open 7 days a week. For more info on Alienate Design visit their website at [www.alienatedesign.co.uk](http://www.alienatedesign.co.uk)

## GRANDAD SHOWS NO SIGN OF FLAGGING WITH TATTOOS

Owner of numerous world records, which include riding a scooter non stop for 1001 hours and leasing the second floor of his house out for a billion years, Guinness Rishi (formerly Har Prakash Rishi) is a big tattoo fan. Well, with plans to get 220 country flags tattooed on your body (150 done already) and a world map with country flags as well, you'd have to be an enthusiast! His next plans include getting the slogan 'say no to terrorism' inked on his body in 60 languages.

It will take three years to tattoo his entire body with these and he is also looking to do a separate non-stop tattoo marathon for 46 hours for another record attempt. Though he suffers from diabetes and says his tattoos take a while to heal, he clearly can't get enough: "These tattoos have increased my libido. I feel young. I feel like proposing to my wife all over again." Apparently his wife isn't that fond of Guinness' record attempts though and his in-laws call him a joker, but by the sounds of it the whole family is involved in some way or another. His wife has gifted him a half-inch-by-half-inch piece of land, the smallest plot ever gifted

and received and in 1991, she wrote the smallest will, which simply said: "All to Son." On top of that, half-inch-by-half-inch invitation cards were printed for their son's wedding. If that wasn't bizarre enough Guinness once had all of his teeth removed so he could fit 755 drinking straws into his mouth and in 2001, he also adopted his 61 year old brother-in-law. Oh, and let's not forget the 9ft bra he's designing. Whatever gets you through the night Bro!







## THE HANDS OF GOD...

Australian born Ian 'KID ZOOM' Strange recently ran a pop-up exhibition in NYC that ran from December 11 to 30.

A little late for a news column you may think but just check out this awesome work. What, you think we'd just let it go after we found it? You'll just have to be here next issue...



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

A man who wanted to tattoo his grey pony with the Rolling Stones "tongue" logo has been banned from doing so by a court in Germany.

The man had already shaved a 16cm square patch on the pony's hindquarters and tattooed the outline of the design before the matter was referred to the court in Muenster. He had wanted to make the pony "more unique and beautiful", the man told the court. But the judge had reason to believe that it would have been an advert for an animal tattooing business the horseowner was hoping to set up. A court statement read: "The tattooing of a warm-blooded vertebrate contravenes animal welfare laws, which forbid causing an animal pain without reason."



## FRENCH QUARTER

The Playboy Playmate Ann French plans to raise funds by getting people to sponsor her to have her favourite charity's logo tattooed on her thigh.

Four years ago, the Darlington born beauty handed the Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) Support Group their biggest single donation after raising more than £1500 by selling balloon race tickets.

She's now aiming to double that by getting the group's tortoise logo emblazoned on her leg - and while the cute image of the little green tortoise is a far cry from the body art she already has, Ann doesn't care because she has personal reasons for wanting to do it.

"Guillain-Barre Syndrome isn't very well-known but it's a horrible condition which affects your peripheral nervous system, causing complete paralysis," she said.

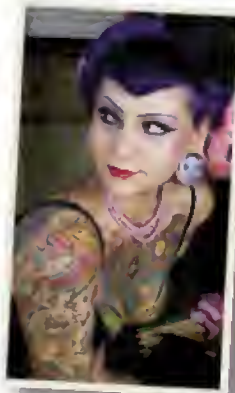
"I have first hand experience of it because my Granddad, Thomas Johnson, had it. He never gave up hope and managed to learn to walk with a stick and move his arms once again. Unfortunately on my 21st birthday he had a massive stroke while in hospital having other treatment for his GBS and died three days later. I've seen first-hand how lives can be affected by GBS and think it needs highlighting."

To make a donation, please visit [www.justgiving.com/annfrench1](http://www.justgiving.com/annfrench1) or go to Ann's website: [www.annfrench.com](http://www.annfrench.com)

In 2007 she beat off Hollywood names like Penelope Cruz, Christina Aguilera, Drew Barrymore, Pink and Gisele Bundchen, to be named third hottest tattooed woman in the world by US magazine Vanishing Tattooist, beaten only by Jessica Alba and Angelina Jolie.

"I love tattoos, they're all pieces of art and I have always wanted to get as many as I could, but that isn't something that matches the clean-cut image of the commercial model," she said. I wanted to do what I wanted to my body, and the two just didn't go hand in hand, which is where the glamour came in."

Now an official European Playboy Playmate, Ann has featured frequently in Playboy America and was the official face of the Playboy UK re-brand.



## PURPLE POISON...

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## CONVENTIONS

All details correct at time of going to press.

**JANUARY 14 – 16**

### **GATHERING OF THE TRIBES**

Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia  
[www.tattooconventions.com.my](http://www.tattooconventions.com.my)

**JANUARY 15 – 16**

### **TATTOO FREEZE**

International Centre, Telford  
[www.tattoofreeze.com](http://www.tattoofreeze.com)

**JANUARY 21 – 23**

### **SURF 'N' INK INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION**

Gold Coast Convention Centre, Gold Coast, Australia  
 Tel: +61 431 455 928  
[www.tattoosurfink.com](http://www.tattoosurfink.com)

**JANUARY 28 – 30**

### **rites of passage TATTOO CONVENTION & ARTS FESTIVAL**

Royal Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Australia  
[www.ritesofpassagefestival.com](http://www.ritesofpassagefestival.com)

**JANUARY 29 – 30**

### **BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION**

Brighton Racecourse, Brighton, East Sussex, England  
[www.brightontattoo.com](http://www.brightontattoo.com)

**FEBRUARY 4 – 6**

### **ZARAGOZA TATTOO CONVENTION**

Feria de Zaragoza, Zaragoza, Spain  
[www.zaragozatattooconvention.com](http://www.zaragozatattooconvention.com)

**FEBRUARY 19 – 20**

### **LYON TATTOO CONVENTION**

[www.lyontattooconvention.com](http://www.lyontattooconvention.com)  
 Villeurbanne, France

**FEBRUARY 25 – 26**

### **TATTOO MELTDOWN**

Folkets Hus Kulturhus, Trollhättan, Sweden  
[www.tattoo-meltdown.com](http://www.tattoo-meltdown.com)  
 Email: [info@tattoo-meltdown.com](mailto:info@tattoo-meltdown.com)

**MARCH 5 – 6**

### **MANCHESTER TATTOO SHOW**

Manchester Central Centre, Manchester,  
[www.manchestertattooshow.co.uk](http://www.manchestertattooshow.co.uk)

**MARCH 11 – 13**

### **BUDAPEST INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION**

Lurdy House, Ungarn, Budapest, Hungary  
[www.budapesttattooconvention.com](http://www.budapesttattooconvention.com)

**MARCH 12 – 13**

### **LICHTENSTEIN TATTOO CONVENTION**

Sporryhalle Vaduz, Lichtenstein  
[www.tattoo81.li](http://www.tattoo81.li)

**MARCH 20 – 21**

### **ESSEX TATTOO EXPO**

The Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood, Essex, England  
[www.myspace.com/essexattoexpo](http://www.myspace.com/essexattoexpo)

**MARCH 25 – 27**

### **KILLIBEGS TATTOO CONVENTION**

Killibegs, Co. Donegal, Ireland  
[www.myspace.com/killibegstattoo](http://www.myspace.com/killibegstattoo)

**MARCH 27**

### **PETERLEE TATTOO ARTS FESTIVAL**

Peterlee Leisure Centre, Peterlee, County Durham, England  
 Tel: 0191 5871787  
[eddie@ehardiman.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:eddie@ehardiman.orangehome.co.uk)

# WALK THIS WAY...

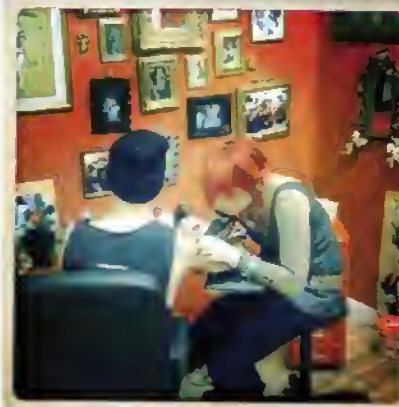
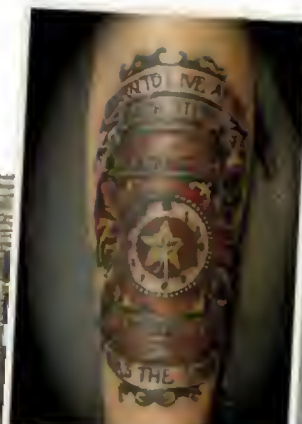
**B**lack Inc. was opened by Miss Jo Black, Rowena Haylett and Reds Haylett in November 2010. Miss Jo has been tattooing for just over three years, Rowena has trained as a body piercer with Mac "Dr Evil" McCarthy and Reds is the current shop apprentice. Priding themselves on their custom tattoos, body piercing and laser removal treatments, the studio is a place that clients should feel they can come and hang out, have a cup of tea from the classy vintage teas-made machine and get an "amazing piece of artwork on their skin."

The crew decided to open Black Inc. because "we all wanted to provide a place that people would feel welcome and comfortable getting pierced and tattooed in. Both tattoos and piercings have had a lot of negative connotations in the past and we want to try and help remove some of these associations by providing the best possible atmosphere and body art for our clients."

"We are enthusiastic about our custom work, and encourage clients to pop in and talk to us about their ideas so we can do our best to shimmy on inside their minds and create something special that's completely original to each client. We always try to steer clients away from generic tattoos, which is why we don't have any flash on the walls."

Miss Jo: I studied art right up to degree level and grew up surrounded by art. I got my first tattoo when I was 17 and decided after a few more bits of ink that I wanted to be a tattooer. I got my first machine about four years ago when my boyfriend at the time, who was also already heavily tattooed, suggested that it was time to bite the bullet and try it out on my own thighs and lower legs. I am not recommending this way of learning to tattoo, it can be dangerous and an apprenticeship is by far the safest, most efficient way to learn, but I was very sensible about it and I am proud to be self taught. I was then offered a job in Cherubs Tattoo Parlour in Devizes based on my portfolio of work."

Recently Miss Jo organised a fundraiser for Cancer Research UK, had half her head shaved and the breast



cancer ribbon tattooed onto her head. So far she has raised almost £500.00. You can still donate at [www.justgiving.com/MissJoBlack](http://www.justgiving.com/MissJoBlack).

"In the future we intend to have as many up and coming guest artists in the studio whenever possible, the first of whom is a fantastic artist named Stuart Pagdin. On 1st February until 6th February 2011, he will be joining us from Skin Illustrations in Whitstable, Kent. You can see more of his work at [www.deeveedesigns.co.uk](http://www.deeveedesigns.co.uk).

The next step for Black Inc. is to get involved in conventions and make a good name for the studio. If you're a local, passing by or like what you see here, drop by, raid the teas-made and tell them we said hi.

**Black Inc.**  
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# JUNE 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> 2011

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[www.inkforheroes.co.uk](http://www.inkforheroes.co.uk) - [myspace.com/inkforheroes](http://myspace.com/inkforheroes) - [facebook.co.uk/inkforheroes](http://facebook.co.uk/inkforheroes)

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All details correct at time of going to press.

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TAP 1, Ny Carlsbergvej 91, 1738  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
[www.inkfest.dk](http://www.inkfest.dk)

**APRIL 10**

### **INK & IRON TATTOO CONVENTION**

The Tower, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston,  
Birmingham, B16 9EE, England  
Email: [info@inkandiron.co.uk](mailto:info@inkandiron.co.uk)

**APRIL 16 - 17**

### **TATTOO EXTRAVANZA**

South Parade Pier, Portsmouth  
[www.tattooextravanza.co.uk](http://www.tattooextravanza.co.uk)

**APRIL 16 - 17**

### **NORTH LAKES TATTOO CONVENTION**

Shepherds Inn & Auctioneer,  
Carlisle, Cumbria  
[www.northlakesattoooshow.com](http://www.northlakesattoooshow.com)

**APRIL 30 - MAY 1**

### **TITANIC INK**

St Mary's Football Ground,  
Southampton, Hampshire, England  
[www.titanic-ink.co.uk](http://www.titanic-ink.co.uk)

**MAY 1 - 2**

### **NEWPORT TATTOO CONVENTION**

Neport City leisure centre  
[www.newporttattooconvention.co.uk](http://www.newporttattooconvention.co.uk)  
[info@newporttattooconvention.co.uk](mailto:info@newporttattooconvention.co.uk)  
ticket office 01633 656757

**MAY 13 - 15**

### **LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION**

The Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, England  
[www.tattooconvention.co.uk](http://www.tattooconvention.co.uk)

**MAY 21 - 22**

### **17TH ALCHEMY TATTOO EXPO**

Salle Polyvalente, Conthey, Switzerland  
[www.alchemy-tattoo-expo.ch](http://www.alchemy-tattoo-expo.ch)

**MAY 21 - 22**

### **12TH INTERNATIONAL NEEDLE ART CONVENTION**

Bress Sportcenter  
Breda - The Netherlands

**MAY 28 - 29**

### **BOURNEMOUTH INK 2011**

[www.bournemouthtattooconvention.com](http://www.bournemouthtattooconvention.com)  
Bournemouth

**JUNE 12**

### **READING TATTOO SHOW**

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Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EQ  
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[readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk)  
t: 0118 959 0700

**JUNE 18 - 19**

### **INK FOR HEROES**

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Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire  
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[inkforheroes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:inkforheroes@hotmail.co.uk)  
t: 07796 936 355

**JUNE 18 - 19**

### **12TH ANNUAL PORTSMOUTH CONVENTION**

Portsmouth Guildhall  
[www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com](http://www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com)

**JUNE 24 - 26**

### **TATTOOLAPALOOZA**

Hyatt Regency, Miami, Florida, USA  
Website: [www.tattoolapalooza.com](http://www.tattoolapalooza.com)

# SMALLMAN SYNDROME

One man's tragic obsession with the sillier side of tattooing...

**H**ello once again, dear tattooed friends. Is me, Jim Smallman, stand-up comedian and seeker of the daftest ink known to man.

This month I've had two small revelations concerning tattoos of my own. The first concerned my frankly ridiculous and now infamous Ron Burgundy ink. When I'm onstage I do a slow reveal of my tattoos, starting with the sensible Oscar Wilde quote, through the slightly sillier Blinky (the red pacman ghost) and finally onto Ron, usually to howls of laughter and if I'm lucky, some applause. However at a gig in Nuneaton just the other night, I did my teasing unveiling and after the laughter over Mr Burgundy's moustachioed face had subsided a small voice rang out from the back of the room.

"I've got that as well."

Oh yes. A young chap called Kieran had Ron etched into the top of his foot - taken from the same initial portrait as mine. I dragged him up onstage to verify this to a standing ovation (which was more for him than me. Curses!). Of course, we're now best friends for life - even if I do look at my Ron tattoo in a slightly less excited way now, knowing he's not the one and only. Dammit.

As with most months, another design has been etched into me since we last spoke. This was on the suggestion of my agent who jokingly said that I should have something that signified that I never turn work down or have a day off. To surprise him I got my mate Shay at Kazbah in Leicester to knock together something for me - a power switch that was permanently set to on. I'm most pleased with it so spent the next couple of days showing it off to my mates, as you do.

It was then that I realised the other meaning of this design and had my second revelation - that away from the retro-tech cool and a point that is known only to me and my agent - it pretty much says that I'm permanently turned on. Which may explain why so many girls have been avoiding me or checking out my crotch for verification...

It isn't true, by the way. That's my keys.

Don't forget to send me your interesting ink, contact details below as usual. This month: a cracker in the shape of Nicholas Murphy of Portadown



and his awesome Father Jack tattoo. I received his email as I was about to go onstage and couldn't stop smiling. Or saying "feck". Design was by Aaron Lyons of Banbridge, Northern Ireland.

More from me next month. And if you're going to Tattoo Freeze come and say hi and show off your daft ink to me in person!

Email: [jim@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:jim@skindeep.co.uk)

Twitter: [@jimsmallman](https://twitter.com/jimsmallman)

Website: [www.jimsmallman.com](http://www.jimsmallman.com)

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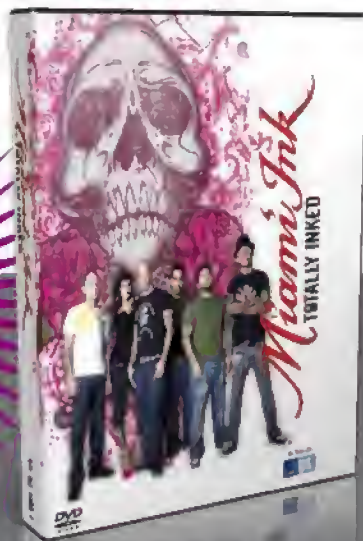
# INKOMING

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### BAND ON THE RUN

Dear Skin Deep

I found the editorial in issue 192 very thought provoking. I unfortunately used to fit the bill of the guy who likes the footballers tattoos and knows little much else about the world of tattoos. My inspiration nine years ago came in the shape of musicians and their tribal work, and I still maintain that there is nothing wrong with this as the work I liked, was, and is, awesome ie: Anthony Kiedis from Red Hot Chili Peppers - his back piece is outstanding.

My error was in thinking that, or more correctly lack of thinking that I could get any tattoo artist to do the job. I'd fallen into the hands of a scratcher, a big mistake that has lead to a lot of hours of correcting his work, however it was not a total loss for me as this scratcher had a subscription to Skin Deep magazine which opened my eyes to a world of possibilities. Here I am nine years on still buying your magazine, still getting inspired and now thanks to the knowledge you share waiting patiently, saving my pennies until I have enough funds to get a sleeve from Kore Flatmo who came to my attention via you gleeed it, Skin Deep.

So after a lot of waffling - back to the editorial, thanks to my own experience in the past whenever any friends mention about getting a tattoo like Joe Bloggs or whoever, I urge them to have a look through my hefty back catalogue of magazines or hit [bigtattooplanet.com](http://bigtattooplanet.com) for inspiration and encourage them to get the best tattoo, not the cheapest or most convenient as they won't turn out like the stars they've seen them on.

I'd like to think if each reader does this we might just make the tattoo universe that much greater.

Kieron Crewe

T-shirt size large he writes hopefully

*You're right - Kiedis has some great tattoos - if memory serves me right, the work was done by Henk Schiffmacher back in the nineties. Thanks for commenting on the point I was making, I'm sure it doesn't begin and end with rock stars and footballers but it's certainly an interesting back story for many.*

### GENERATION X AND Y

Dear Skin Deep

I would be happy to feature in your magazine. My daughter is 21 and has large tattoos and so do I. I also work in a professional environment which has helped some attitudes towards women with ink! I think it would be good to have a feature on women in their 30s with tattoos as many of your models and features are about young women and we get left out. I am 37 and I get many comments from people about my tattoos, good and bad and I think it would make a good feature having a twenty something (my daughter) and a thirty something (me) with tattoos discussing the generation gap.

Gail Whitcher

*Careful what you wish for Gail... we'll be in touch shortly.*

### EIRINN GO BRÁCH!

Dear Skin Deep

I am writing to inform you of an ongoing issue here in Northern Ireland in relation to tattooing. Tattoos are widely loved and adored here in our little corner of the world, I would know as I am a tattoo apprentice here. I work in the industry and see how people adore it.

Unfortunately though, a few business' here do not love it as much as we do. Many people I know including tattooists are being turned away from bars, clubs and restaurants because of the ink we have embedded in our skin, no matter the image.

What enrages me about this is that if I was of a different racial colour, they would have no problem letting me into their establishment, and yet because my skin is neon green and pink, they will not allow it. I do not see the difference.

Maybe I am biased, but since when did a tattooists money become less worthy than anyone else's? Especially when so many establishments are closing because of this 'credit crunch'?

It affects me personally as a 20 year old heavily tattooed female, who can't go out with her friends to a birthday party in the city because of the colour of her skin. It is disgusting.

Thankfully the tattooists of Northern Ireland are now taking a stand, and I wanted to inform you all at Skin Deep of our efforts! It has

been a big story here on radio and in the newspapers, and hopefully we will be able to name, shame and expose these establishments! It will be a BIG win for the world of tattooing in our little corner and noteworthy enough for me to be to keep you informed!

Nikita

*Thanks Nikita - like you say, keep us chued in - always interested in people fighting the good fight!*

### FISH TALES

Dear Skin Deep

Hi. First off I want to stress that I'm a kid at 15 years of age. I have always been into the more alternative side of life and I love art. Sadly I live in Ireland, my local tat shops I'm not too familiar with and one is supposed to be dreadful. This is a problem for me as I'm constantly drawing on my hands and my friends think I should follow a career in tattooing. But even my school and the social system is very against this. I'm a metalhead and I'd love to have my ear plugged (only my left ear is pierced) but due to school I have to wear fake plugs and even at that not during school. If you are seen with ink and/or piercing you are considered a scumbag or traveller. I'm going to Waterford for two weeks were I've been told there are some great places for tats but until then I want to thank you for reaching my little corner of the world and inspiring me, it genuinely means a lot.

Thanks. Fish

*What can I say! First of all, with Ireland featuring twice this issue with negative comments, it looks like it's about time we got over there and brought you guys some features on the place because I know for a fact there are some fantastic artists over there - but "supposed to be dreadful" is not first hand experience of it actually being dreadful - you're judging without knowledge which is what people are doing to you - sucks huh? Secondly - school is school y'know. It is what it is and we've all been there (or not as the case may be). Like I've said before - if you're serious about your chosen career, use the system to learn how to draw better and better. Drain the system of its knowledge for what you want to do later and kick the sand back in the face with success. Keep the faith bro!*



Artwork:  
Steve A: Indelible, Bournemouth



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01293553636 https://tickets.hawth.co.uk

COVENTRY, Belgrade Theatre Fri 14 JAN  
02476553955 www.belgrade.co.uk

HASTINGS, White Rock Theatre Sat 15 JAN  
01424462288 www.whiterocktheatre.org.uk

READING, Hexagon Sun 16 JAN  
01189606060 www.readingarts.com

HORNCHURCH, Queens Theatre Mon 17 & Tue 18 JAN  
08448 717 650 www.queens-theatre.co.uk

BRIGHTON, Theatre Royal Wed 19 JAN  
01273 202080 www.theatreroyalbrighton.com

DUNSTABLE, Grove Theatre Thu 20 JAN  
www.grovetheatre.co.uk

LICHFIELD, Garrick Theatre Fri 21 JAN  
01543412121 www.lichfieldgarrick.com

RETFORD, Majestic Theatre Sat 22 JAN  
01777 06966 www.majestictheatre.co.uk

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0845 344 2012 www.prestonguildhall.com

SUNDERLAND, Empire Mon 24 JAN  
08448472499 www.sunderlandempire.org.uk

WINDSORFORD, Lifestyle Centre Tue 25 JAN  
01606 550700 www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

LLANUDNO, Venue cymru Wed 26 JAN  
www.venuecymru.co.uk

LIVERPOOL, Empire Thu 27 JAN  
0844 847 2525 www.liverpoolempire.org.uk

SHEFFIELD, City Hall Fri 28 JAN  
01142789789 www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk

STOKE, Victoria Hall Sat 29 JAN  
08448717615 www.ambassadorickets.com/Victoria-Hall

HEREFORD, Courtyard Theatre Sun 30 JAN  
01432340555 www.courtyardtheatre.org.uk

SOUTHEND, Palace Theatre Tue 1 FEB  
01702351135 www.thecliffspavilion.co.uk

STREET, Strode theatre Wed 2 FEB  
01709 823621 www.strode-theatre.co.uk

CARDIFF, New Theatre Thu 3, Fri 4, Sat 5 FEB  
02920878888 www.newtheatre Cardiff.co.uk

ROTHERHAM, Civic Theatre Mon 7 FEB  
01709 823621 www.therham.gov.uk/theatres

BIRMINGHAM, Alexandra Theatre Tue 8 FEB  
08448472293 www.alexandra-theatre.org.uk

OXFORD, New Theatre Wed 9 FEB  
0844 847 1585 www.newtheatreoxford.org.uk

BURNLEY, Mechanics, Thu 10 FEB  
0128 2664400 www.burnleymechanics.co.uk

DUMFRIES, DG One Fri 11 FEB  
01887 243 550 www.dgcommunity.net

HALIFAX, Victoria theatre Sat 12 FEB  
www.victoria-theatre.co.uk

WHITLEY BAY, The Playhouse Sun 13 FEB  
08442772771 www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk

### A VALENTINES DAY MASSAGE

ABERDEEN, Music Hall Mon 14 FEB  
01224 641122 www.boxofficeaberdeen.com

KILMARNOCK, The Palace Wed 16 FEB  
01563554900 www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/comser/theatre/programme.asp

FALKIRK, Town Hall Thu 17 FEB  
01324 506850 www.falkirk.gov.uk/cultural

GLENROTHES, Rothes Halls Fri 18 FEB  
01592 611101 www.lifedirect.org.uk/attfile

DUNDEE, Whitehall Theatre Sat 19 FEB  
08717 029 486 www.whitehallundee.co.uk

GREENOCK, Arts Guild Theatre Sun 20 FEB  
01475 723038 www.artsguildtheatre.co.uk

EDINBURGH, Playhouse Theatre Mon 21 FEB  
0844 847 1660 www.edinburghplayhouse.org.uk

SCARBOROUGH, Futurist Theatre Wed 23 FEB  
01723 365789 www.futuristtheatre.co.uk

SKEGNESS, Embassy Theatre Thu 24 FEB  
08456740505 www.embassytheatre.co.uk

BOLTON, Albert Halls Fri 25 FEB  
01204 334400 www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk

DARLINGTON, Civic Theatre Sat 26 FEB  
01325486555 www.darlington.gov.uk/culture/arts

BLACKPOOL, Grand Theatre Sun 27 FEB  
01253 290190 www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk

MANCHESTER, Palace Theatre Mon 28 FEB  
0844 847 2484 www.manchesterpalace.org.uk

NEW BRIGHTON, Floral Pavilion Theatre Tue 1 MAR  
0151 666 0000 www.florallpavilion.com

BRECON, Theatre Brycheiniog Wed 2 MAR  
01874 611622 www.brycheiniog.co.uk

SWANSEA, Grand Theatre Thu 3 MAR  
01792 475715 www.swansea.gov.uk

CHELtenham, Town Hall Fri 4 MAR  
0844 576 2210 www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk

TORQUAY, Princess Theatre Sat 5 MAR  
0844 847 2319 www.princess-theatre.org.uk

BOURNEMOUTH, Pavilion Sun 6 MAR  
0844 576 3000 www.bic.co.uk

NEW WIMBLEDON Theatre Mon 7 MAR  
0844 871 7646 www.ambassadorickets.com

CHELMESFORD, Civic Theatre Tue 8 MAR  
01245 606505 www.chelmsford.gov.uk

WORTHING, Pavilion Wed 9 MAR  
01903 206206 www.worthingtheatre.co.uk

HORSHAM, Capitol Theatre Thu 10 MAR  
01403 750220 www.thecapitolhorsham.com

FOLKESTONE, Leas Cliff Hall Fri 11 MAR  
0844 847 1778 www.leascliffhall.co.uk

MARGATE, Winter Gardens Sat 12 MAR  
01843 295111 www.margatewintergardens.co.uk

SWINDON, Wyvern Theatre Sun 13 MAR  
01793 524 481 www.wyverntheatre.org.uk

GLASGOW, King's Theatre Mon 14 MAR  
0844 871 7646 www.ambassadorickets.com/King's Theatre

HARLOW, Playhouse Wed 15 & Thu 17 MAR  
01279431945 www.playhouseharlow.com

IPSWICH, Playhouse Fri 18 MAR  
01473 431100 www.ipswichregent.com

CLACTON, Princes Theatre Sat 19 MAR  
01255 686633 www.essex-live.co.uk

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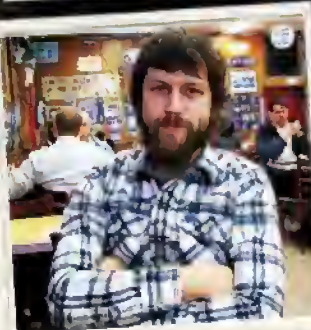
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WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: CRAIGY LEE  
WWW.CRAIGYLEE.COM

# PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

**Craigy Lee was playing in bands and driving American bands on tour when tattooing found him.**

He eventually walked away from the music industry with his ears still ringing and decided to pursue a more creative path in life. Having spent months working on a portfolio before flying to Tampa, Florida to apprentice at New World Vision Tattoo Studio.



Me



Holdfast Street

Craigy returned to England and found a two year home at Ouch Tattoo in London. You can take the man out of the tour bus but not necessarily the other way around - the need to develop and explore has driven him back to the road and Craigy is now headed out across Australia in search of inspiration and taking in as many tattoo studios as he can find on his way.

Marriage, kids and mortgages are all things that tie you down and quite frankly scare the hell out of me! All of the above, recession and another cold

winter is reason enough to set sail for the adventure of a lifetime, spending the next twelve months traveling across Australia, working conventions, doing guest spots, meeting as many people as I can and keeping a travel diary for the good ship Skin Deep along the way.

My first stop is Perth, situated on the West Coast it is the most isolated city in Australia. A bit of a culture shock for a Londoner who is used to 24 hour service for pretty much anything. The current state of tattooing seems to be healthy - once you drive around the city and suburbs it's hard to drive more than twenty minutes without passing a studio. Some of you may have heard of Phil Smart and ex-Brit Suzi Q at Holdfast Tattoo, who turn out some fantastic traditional work and whose recent guest artists have included Steve Byrne and Chad Koeplinger. Marc Pinto at Primitive in the city is also well known locally and at conventions internationally for his hand poked work.

Everywhere in the world, tattooing is growing and Perth is not being left behind. Having just held its first ever tattoo convention organised by the PTAA ("Professional Tattooing Association of Australia" to you and me), which on all accounts was a huge success, proving the healthy growth of tattoo art across the pond.

I'm starting my tattoo journey working at Tattoo Affair, owner and



Primitive



Me with with SuziQ



AJ Tattooing



Marc Pinto



**MAYBE ONE OF THE REASONS MOST PEOPLE HAVEN'T HEARD OF MANY AUSSIE ARTISTS IS THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA IS ONLY ONE THIRD OF THAT OF THE UK.**

artist AJ has been tattooing in Western Australia for thirty two years, longer than anyone else in the state. Having had enough of politics and a busy life of the city, AJ moved his studio south of the river to Como five years ago, where it operates today. His favorite styles are oriental and realistic horror work and he has a steady flow of customers, many of whom are having oriental themed body suits or large scale pieces. He is currently working on regular Zack and proudly tells me "I tattooed his dad twenty odd years ago, I've known Zack since he was a kid" His work is good, clean and honest, a strong reputation that keeps him busy 32 years in.

AJ is certainly a character, he is one of the old school from days long gone - days he recalls when biker gangs owned a large percentage of the studios, days when the industry was self regulated by artists who got together for mutual benefit, scratchers were "spoken to" and sorted out and the "Red Hammer Club" took care of any new studios that opened within a certain distance of an established studio. Sounds like the Wild West doesn't it? Those days are now thankfully long gone and while there is still a biker presence, there are now a lot of studios owned and operated by artists, pushing tattooing forward as an art form. ☺



just outside Perth



# PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

Maybe one of the reasons most people haven't heard of many Aussie artists is the fact that the entire population of Australia is only one third of that of the UK. Although for such a vast continent, there are still plenty of world class artists putting out work at an international level and making a name for themselves.

Ex-Brit Suzi Q is one such artist - she has been working at Holdfast Tattoo for the past 4 years and greets me with a huge smile. Having settled here because there were not many known female artists in the city at the time, she is certainly busy, booking six month slots in advance. She has not only made a good name for herself in Perth but also within the industry. The studios last art show was a huge success, spanning a week and selling every painting in the exhibition. Suzi puts this down to the small town feel of Perth, "people seem to get behind you here," she tells me, "I think it's the isolation and the small town feel within a city".

Guest spots are a regular occurrence at Holdfast with high calibre artists such as Steve Byrne and Chad Koeplinger getting booked up the day they are announced and it's no

surprise! Home grown artists are important at Holdfast too and they are doing everything they can to make sure Australia has new blood for the future having several apprentices at each of their studios. "It's an old style apprenticeship - we teach them everything from the ground up." They also rotate their crew between the two shops, making it feel like one big team, and stopping anyone from getting too comfortable. "Healthy competition between the artists is good, everyone appreciates the other artists work even if it's not their own style." The crew are currently working on a book, compiling their artwork as a shop and in turn getting Holdfast out to a wider audience, moving the tattoo industry forward with their creative offerings.

Another well know name in Perth is Marc Pinto at Primitive. He has been working in the city for 14 years and his shop is easy to find right in the city centre. He greets me warmly and is softer spoken then I had first expected. He tells me how in the first five years in the city, he worked solely by hand - in a traditional way, in recent years however he has taken up tattooing with

machines to broaden his horizons. He is a great ambassador for tattooing and its history. Originally from Singapore, he has travelled the world meeting some of the most influential artists of his generation. Marc settled in Perth due to his family but spends his time between Perth and Singapore having opened a second studio there 2 years ago. He finds his Perth customers very open, especially when it comes to custom work, "They are not so picky and let me interpret their design creating something we are both happy with - it's nice because in Singapore there can be a lot of haggling". He has seen the industry change a lot in the past few years especially in Asia where taboos surrounding inked skin are becoming diluted with the help of mainstream TV shows and conventions.

In Australia biker gangs have much less influence on shops and tattooing as a whole has become a lot more accessible which sadly, he comments, increases the budding 'backyarders' out there. That aside, the future is bright through the eyes of Marc Pinto. Progression and technique are the only things worth being interested in.

More from  
Craig next  
issue as he  
continues  
his Tour

IN AUSTRALIA BIKER GANGS HAVE MUCH LESS INFLUENCE ON SHOPS AND TATTOOING AS A WHOLE HAS BECOME A LOT MORE ACCESSIBLE WHICH SADLY, HE COMMENTS, INCREASES THE BUDDING 'BACKYARDERS' OUT THERE.

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Jamie Parker

Jeff Johnson

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# MASTERS OF REALITY

Renowned for his stunning realism work and putting ink into the skin of Sylvester Stallone and Chris Daughtry, Mike DeVries is rightly ranked among the world's best. With MD Tattoo Studio going from strength to strength in just a few short years, we thought it was high time we checked in to survey out the lay of the land. Mike – over to you:

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“

Well, I opened MD Tattoo Studio in July of 2008, so we're a fairly new shop in the big scheme of things. Most tattoo artists have a goal of opening their own shop one day and of course, that was one goal of mine too, but opening and running a shop is not easy and at times I question if it's worth it, but after some time, a lot of dedication and hard work, it has turned out to be a positive experience.”

**That's not a statement that everybody who owns and runs their own shop can attest to. With the public perception of tattoo shop**

**management most likely being what they have picked up from LA Ink and suchlike shows – editing aside – is that how things pan out in the real world too?**

“In the beginning, the shop went through a few artists that didn't work out, but after spending some time sorting things out and learning as I went along, the shop is going well for us. I have a crew that I'm very thankful for – they're not only people that I work with, but to me they are family: Jeff Johnson, Katelyn Crane, Josh Duffy, London, and my up-and-coming apprentice, Jamie Parker. I love going to work not only to tattoo and create art, but also to hang out with my crew

all day. We have a good time. MD Tattoos is an open environment where we are working together and having a blast doing so. We all feed artistically from each other, no one has an ego, and we all take tattooing very seriously while having fun doing it.

The vibe in the shop is totally geared towards artistic creativity and all of the artists are encouraged to express themselves as such but I also feel that in order to run a successful shop, there needs to be a balance between being creative and being business-minded. Being creative in artwork and design, but

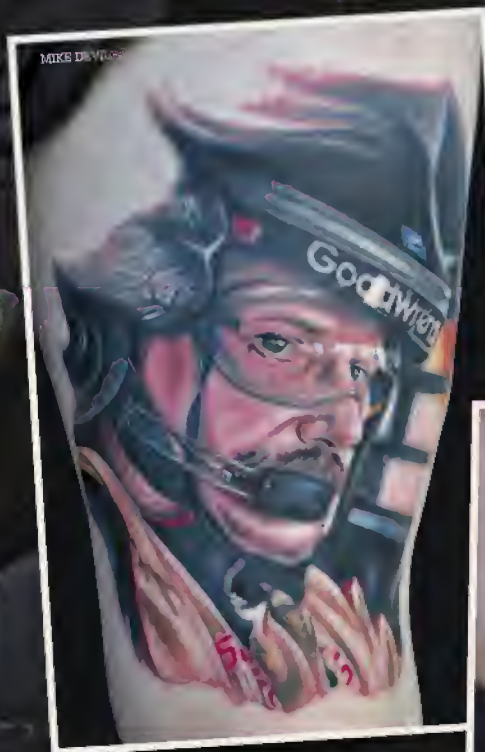




Mike  
DeVries

Josh Duffy

Katelyn Crane



**WE ALL FEED ARTISTICALLY FROM EACH OTHER, NO ONE HAS AN EGO, AND WE ALL TAKE TATTOOING VERY SERIOUSLY WHILE HAVING FUN DOING IT.**



also being business-minded in the sense of having a good work ethic, keeping things neat and organised and ultimately making sure the customer is satisfied."

**So how do all of you individual cogs fit together here? You've already** ☺





MIKE DEVRIES

**IT'S NICE HAVING A CREW THAT CAN  
TATTOO ANYONE WHO WALKS THROUGH  
THE DOOR - IN ANY STYLE. EVERYONE WHO  
WORKS HERE DABBLES IN ALL STYLES.**

said it took a few goes to get it right - is that simply from a "fitting in" point of view - presumably you were looking for a crew that could offer as much variety as possible, bring things to the table that were different from your skills and even learn from yourself?

"I'm a true believer that everything happens for a reason. I had a few good

guys early on that just didn't work out for various reasons. As of now, the MD crew is definitely dialled in. I've always wanted a crew that has variety and that is diverse in style. It's nice having a crew that can tattoo anyone who walks through the door - in any style. Everyone who works here dabbles in all styles, but each of us have a forte, at least in my eyes.

"Jeff Johnson is our bio-organic guy, especially working in colour. He also does some really cool Japanese-style work, along with some traditional work. Josh Duffy loves black and grey, working with portraits and evil-type imagery, along with bio-mech designs. Over there, Katelyn's style is diverse in its own right! She loves tattooing bugs, along with new skool, traditional and some realism. London has been doing some great realistic portraits in colour lately, along with his own cartoony, new skool, bright, colourful, bold work. Jamie likes to work with his evil-ish Japanese-style, but is willing to do anything to practice since he is new to the game as my apprentice. Then there's me - I prefer colour realism, but love it when I have the chance to throw down some black and grey - I don't get requests for it very often."

**Apprenticeships seem to be hard to come by these days - what did you see in Jamie that convinced you to take him under your wing?**

"Jamie was actually a client of mine and we were doing some tattoo work on his arm of a picture he created in Photoshop. I liked what he created, so we started this sleeve on him and mid-way through completing it, we talked about art, where he worked, and I started to learn things about him. He was at a job that he wasn't in love with - creating Photoshop designs for a company that made toys. At one point, after seeing his initial



**CRANIAL  
VISIONS**

"Cranial Visions was an idea I had a couple years back when skull artwork was popping up everywhere. I really wanted to document a moment of time that featured a bundle of artists who were creating incredible art, that all had something in common - which was the skull. I asked Jeff Johnson to help and be a part of the project. Without his help and hard work it wouldn't have been possible to complete it in such a short amount of time. It was definitely a fun project for Jeff and I!

Cranial Visions features 258 artists, 240 full-colour pages with over 800 photos. It's really a great collection of work. I'm very excited about it and even more excited to share it with everyone. As soon as we're done with this interview I'm going to start packing up books to send out to some of the artists that participated - so this is a good time to say thanks again to everyone who submitted artwork. It's much appreciated!"

MIKE DEVRIES



MIKE DEVRIES







JOSH DUFFY



KATELYN CRANE



LONDON



JOSH DUFFY



LONDON



MIKE DEVRIES

design for his arm we talked about doing a collaborative set of flash. He worked on a couple sheets and I was impressed with what he did.

"We never did complete any flash set, but there was a day when I approached him to see if he wanted to learn how to tattoo and to be my apprentice. He thought about it for about a week and said 'Yes'. I definitely saw potential in him. He was young, creative, and was willing to learn. When he first started with me he had never done a painting. I try to get him to focus on drawing, but his strong point is Photoshop, so I still let him create using that, but it's been amazing to see some of the things he has accomplished in such a short period of time. I just can't tell him that because he's not supposed to get a big head. So don't tell him!"

**I WISH THE ARTIST WOULD HAVE AT LEAST PUT HIS INTERPRETATION INTO THE FLASH AND NOT JUST COPIED IT EXACTLY - JUST TO MAKE IT A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN THE ONE HE DID YESTERDAY OR EARLIER THAT MORNING.**

I'll try my best - maybe you could some stickers made up and drop them over that last paragraph when the magazine comes out. Talking of flash - I see an increasing move away from the old school rule of displaying a lot of flash on the walls, to ones that feature art and are genuinely comfortable places to be tattooed in which is giving those shops a sense of individuality - what's your take

on this? Is there still work to do here with regards to expansion?

Well as you can see, we don't have any flash on the walls. We recently just put together a little flash book portfolio just for the client that wants ideas, but once they decide what direction to go in, then most of the work we do is custom. In my early days I walked into shops and picked out things off the wall for tattoos on myself, and my take on this is that I wish

## THE FUTURE OF THE ART

"We are not even close to the peak yet. Not even touching the surface. There are some amazing artists tattooing right now and I get blown away all the time when checking out some of their work. In another 5-10 years, these artists are going to be even better and I think we are going to see some new guys or girls coming out that are extremely talented as artists and are going to get crazier with it. It's going to be very exciting to see it happen! I am saving some room on my own body for a few of these artists. It's going to happen - somebody will come out and show us all up. Well, at least show me up!"





## COMIC ART & COLLECTING STUFF

"I really got into comic books right after I was into collecting baseball cards. I was more into the art that was in the comics than the actual stories. I would be more concerned with keeping the comic in perfect condition in plastic and hanging it on the walls of my bedroom as pictures for decoration rather than reading them. I know that's not being a die-hard comic book fan, but that's what I did!

I love collecting things. When I was about 17 or 18, I needed money so I sold my whole collection. It bums me out to this day that they are gone. A couple years back, I bought some of my favourites again just to get them back. They were the Spawn comics - so awesome! Now that I'm older, I still love collecting things and I'm now hooked on buying straight-up art and original paintings. The shop and house are full of paintings from artists that I love and respect."

the artist would have at least put his interpretation into the flash and not just copied it exactly - just to make it a little different than the one he did yesterday or earlier that morning - at least some small changes would have been nice.

I recently ran into someone the other day that had the exact same tattoo I have on my forearm and it looked like my arm looked before I had it changed a little bit, but there's a lot of people out there who don't really care if they have the same tattoo as someone else, and they just want it - period. As long as they understand that other people do have it, then it's all good. If they want it, then do it. If I were to do flash or a realistic portrait that I know has been done a million times, I would try my best to talk them into another picture of the same subject or at least change it a little bit to make it more custom.

Most of us here are booked out, so most walk-ins need to make an appointment and come back and get it another day. Although, on occasion, we have clients that have to reschedule and a spot opens up here and there for a walk-in. It's usually best to call or email first if you're thinking about it, especially if you're coming from a long distance and trying to get in that day. As far as expansion goes for us, we are good at this point. Like I said earlier, it's not easy running a shop and I don't think I would want to open another one. But who knows what the future holds." ★

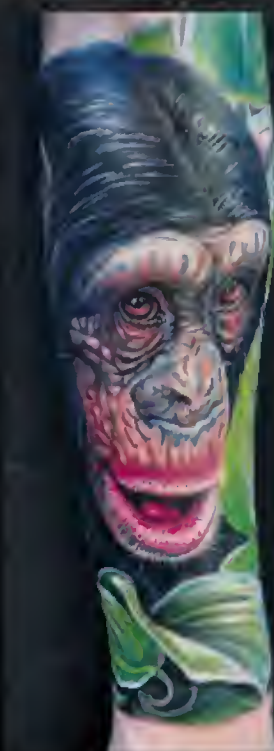
*Mike and I had such a lot to talk about that we've split this feature into two parts - catch part two next issue when we hear more from the Masters of Reality.*



KATELYN CRANE



JEFF JOHNSON



MIKE DEVRIES



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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: P-MOD PHOTOGRAPHY

# BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION



After 13 years, the Brussels Tattoo Convention is back in the spotlight of the European convention scene. November the 13th and 14th saw its long-awaited comeback with the Belgian convention displaying a very attractive European and international programme, in the north of the city.



In spite of the gloomy weather, the cosmopolitan public, mainly from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands came en masse to answer the call of the sizzling needles and although it sometimes required a certain patience to access the heart of the old warehouse from the doors' opening time it was all worth it – in fact, compared to other conventions, the closing hours were a lot earlier than usual!

On the downside, there was the odd flat note in the organisation but we forgot it fast once in the aisles. After a bit of wandering in the Kustom Car exhibition and in the very friendly 50's market, we had the pleasure to discover again the amazing work of the 140 artists present here - most of them regulars like Art Corpus, Left Hand Black, Harizanmai,

Tribo Tattoo or Todd Noble to name a few. Old school, Art Brut, dot work - every style is well represented with a few interesting discoveries too which all goes to confirm what we have suspected for a very long time from visiting the European conventions - keep an eye on eastern European artists! Austria, Hungary, Poland - numerous emerging artists offer some technically impeccable and especially creative work as we already acknowledged during the last Kracow convention.

Let's not forget the Belgian scene though. The booths of La main Bleue, Tendre Furie, Needle Empire, La Boucherie Moderne are constantly full of people. A constant crowd surrounds the Frech-Chinese Migoi, where two shaded back pieces are done simultaneously by two teams of three tattooists. ☺

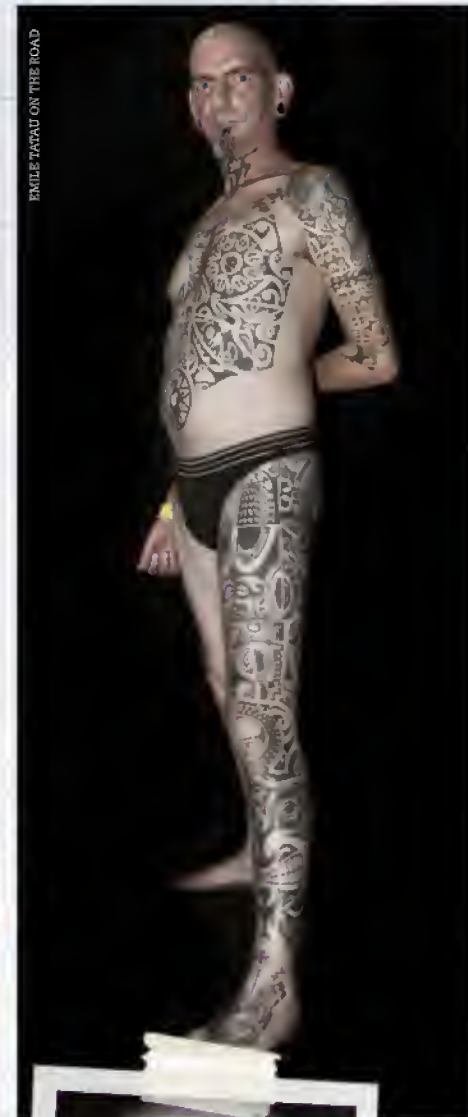




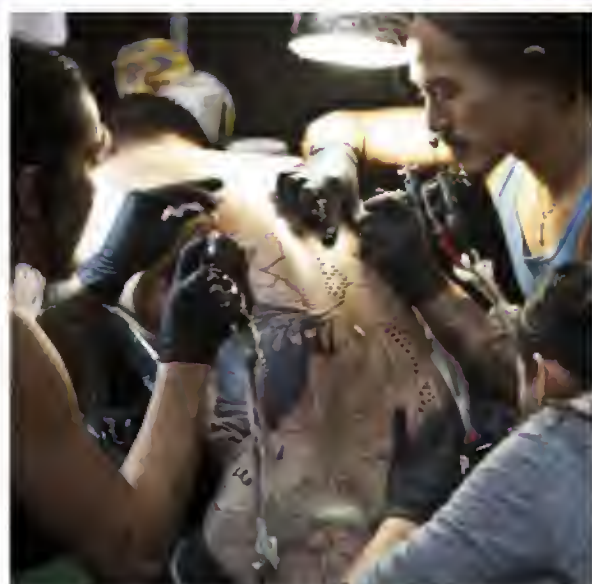
FRUITS - LES-GRANDS-SOUFFLES-INDU



SIMONE, BURNA VISTA



EMILE TAPAU ON THE ROAD



YANN BLACK MONTREAL

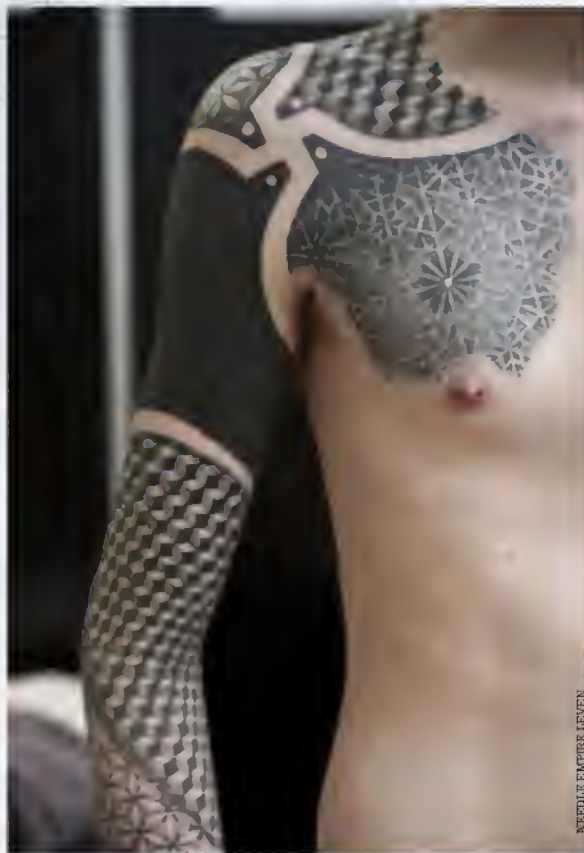


Brussels may not be the first city that springs to mind when it comes to art culture but it certainly has more than it's fair share. Notably, Brussels gave birth to a couple of the world's most loved characters - Tin Tin and Lucky Luke - a walk around some of the lesser streets stand testament to this with the city walls being painted with large comic book characters. It also hosts the Belgian Comics museum which is a must for anybody intrigued by the art form. For those who like to play on the other side of the cultural coin, it is also home to The Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium which is home to collections from Bruegel, Campin and Jordaens amongst others. They also make some good chocolate. At least that's what we're told.





MICHOI FRANCE



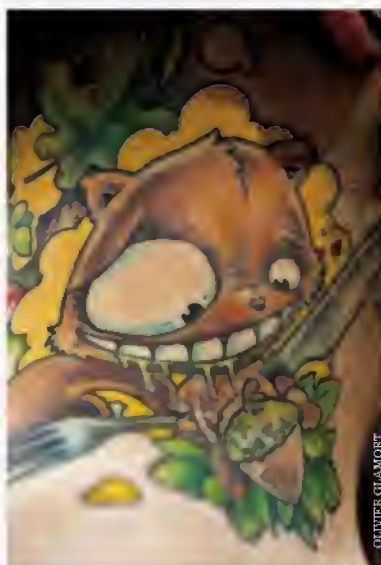
NEEDLE EMPIRE LEVEN



THE TATTOO ARTIST J

**EVERY STYLE IS WELL REPRESENTED WITH A FEW INTERESTING DISCOVERIES TOO WHICH ALL GOES TO CONFIRM WHAT WE HAVE SUSPECTED FOR A VERY LONG TIME FROM VISITING THE EUROPEAN CONVENTIONS - KEEP AN EYE ON EASTERN EUROPEAN ARTISTS!**

At every turn of a corner, the convention plays host to burlesque shows, rockabilly concerts, and every day ends up with the usual tattoo contests, where Buena Vista Tattoo Club and James (Celtic Moon - Hungary) won the Best of the day trophy. ☺



OLIVIER GLAMONT



MODERN ANGELS ANTWERP



BUENA VISTA - BEST OF DAY



LA MAIN BLEUE BELGIUM



TATTOO'GANS GREECE



# New Year Resolutions

1. Spend *more* time with the family.
2. Collect some *fresh* ink.
3. Eat *less* chocolate!



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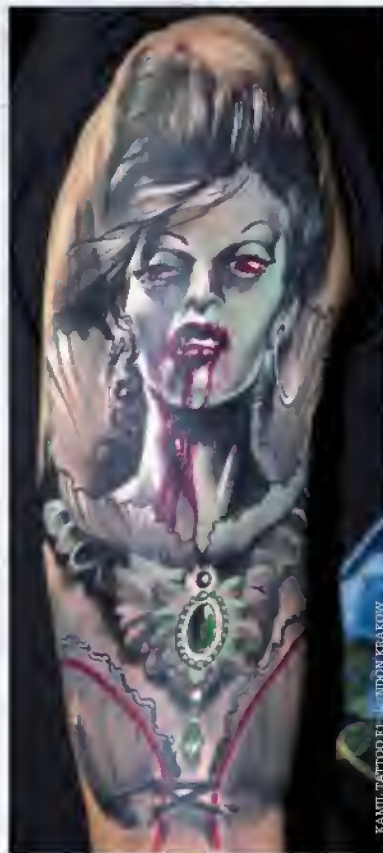
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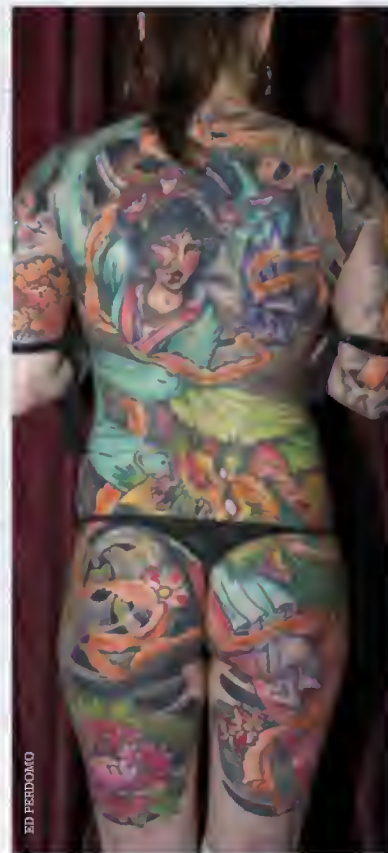




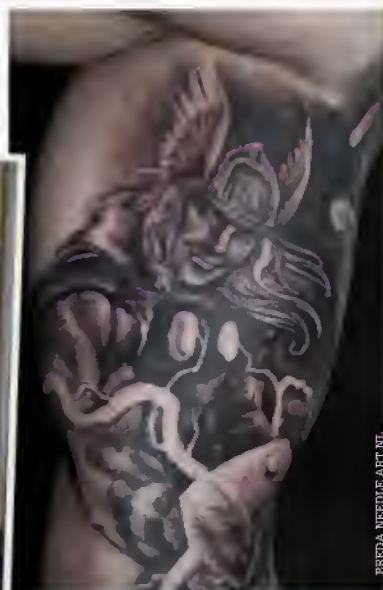
MICHEL FRANGE



KAMIL TATTOO FI - JIDON KEKOW



ED PERDOMO



FREDA NEEDLE ART NL



TATTOO LOANS GREECE

## THIS BELGIAN CONVENTION COMEBACK CAN CLAIM A MORE THAN RESPECTABLE TURN-OUT, AND INTENDS TO CONTINUE NEXT YEAR

In others, Marco Cerretelli (Spotlight tattoo) and Paul & Friends (Brussels) won respectively the "best old school" and the "best of realistic" pieces.

In conclusion, despite the oftentime random organisation, this Belgian convention comeback can claim a more than respectable turn-out, and intends to continue next year - having already confirmed the date for October 2011★



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# WILD CHERRY

One quiet Sunday afternoon, (an occurrence that doesn't happen too often in our house), I was lurking around Facebook when I saw an old school tattoo of an owl. It was one of the best tattoos I had ever seen. The colours were bright and distinctive, the lines straight and bold - the tattoo literally jumped right out of the computer screen it was that good. I can honestly say, it took my breath away. The artist was Samez.

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I immediately contacted Samez, rambling on about how great her work was and a while later she got back to me and we started chatting. We talked about the tattoo on her profile and she "oh so casually" informed me that it was actually a cover-up of an old tribal design. Quickly I flipped back to the picture and for the life of me I couldn't see where the old tattoo used to be. I still can't and she's told me. Yes, Samez is good! Hell, she's brilliant.

Samez didn't start her working life as a tattooist, her first job was in an office, a far cry from the world she lives in now. It was in 2004 that she decided, a well paid job might be nice and safe but you can't ignore the call of the tattoo. It was time to enter the world of tattooing.

Samez spent the first three years in the field, working an apprenticeship in a shop her boyfriend had recently opened. Her tutor was a Venezuelan tattooist, who was in residence at Cherry Tattoo at the time. Then in 2007, Samez

decided it was time to improve her style and technique and she headed out to America to go and see the great tattoo artists she loved, doing what they do best. Basing herself at Sid Stankovits of Sid's Tattoo Parlour in Santa Ana, Samez did various guest spots at different studios and rode the convention circuit., building a base of good friends and regular clients. About meeting Sid she says, "He has been my guide, he gave

me a lot of tricks and suggestions. He improved my tattooing techniques."

Or as Sid puts it, "Samez and I met through a mutual friend, she came by my shop. She was a quick learner, what I would call a natural. She's always had her own style, I helped her tackle some bold and solid colours and lines. I helped her to refine her tattooing skills but her artwork has always been her own and really cool. I'd have Samez







work for me full-time in a heartbeat. She's a good tattoo artist, a good person and one hell of a gal! I like her bold, solid clean work, the kind of tattoos that will last a lifetime."

A month later and Samez was back in Monterotondo, Rome at Cherry Tattoo and the fifties American style studio she co-owns with her boyfriend, body piercer Daniel Sedan.

"Being together twenty-four hours, it's not easy for anyone but I think we must be doing something right as we've been together ten years now! I think the biggest problem with us is that we have very different but very strong personalities. It's like we both want to be top of the class!"

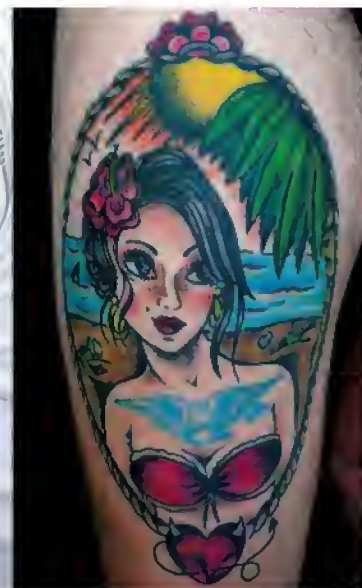
But Samez is quick to point out that Daniel does have his good points too. "He's really patient with the more difficult customers... and I am not!"

Being a piercer, he is a hygiene maniac which is always really good for a tattoo shop," and then quickly with a laugh she adds, "but at the same time he stresses me a lot. He always wants everything to be perfect. I think very few people would get along with him in the workplace, I'm more easy going."

And maybe that's what makes the studio work so well. A dividing of roles

to reach a common goal and a little bit of rivalry along the way. There are no other resident tattooists at Cherry Tattoo either, it's just Samez doing the ink and Daniel the body shots. But Samez is quick to point out that they have a continuous run of guest tattooists working the studio. Big guns in the tattoo world like her old friend

**A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO TATTOO WITHOUT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT IT. YOU KNOW, NOTHING ABOUT THE OLD SCHOOL RULES.**







## CHRIS CONN

**Chris Conn Askew, is another whole story in himself.** Born and raised in California, Conn grew up drawing to the point of obsession. Having no formal training, he single handedly and extremely successfully turned his hand to tattooing. Then, at the height of his career he shocked everyone by retiring from the inking world at the very, very young age of thirty-six. Based in San Francisco, he now plies his trade as an illustrator and artist, using primarily watercolour, ink, graphite, gouache and gold leaf. Running through his prints he features on his website, you can see why Samez name drops this guy. Chris Conn is an artistic force to be reckoned with.

Sid from Santa Ana and Uncle Allan of Copenhagen.

That's the thing I like about Samez, she knows where she's going and what she wants. She has strong ideals and is not scared to share them.

"Nowadays, the tattoo business makes me a little upset. A lot of people are starting to tattoo without knowing anything about it. You know, nothing about the old school rules. There's no passion for the art and they know nothing about drawing. These people,

they think it is a cool fucking way to make money and these people are damaging our world, a world we should try and preserve in every way."

I tend to agree with Samez on this thorny point. I often wonder if programmes like Miami Ink have glamorised the industry. Don't get me wrong, they have done brilliant work at bringing the art form to the fore but at the same time attracting a lot of fly-by-nighters.

I put the question to Samez to see if

she agrees. "I think they are a positive thing for tattooing but I also think that they have to show more what the real tattoo artist's life is like. It's not all about parties and making money. There's the endless research. It's a way of life, you never stop working. It's not as easy as they show on TV."

But Samez doesn't sit back and let this "damage" as she sees it, get out of control. That's just not her style.

"For this reason, I founded the Proud Crew, a group of artists that want to keep the old school rules alive. So far we have my friends Federica (Marsh Mallow Tattoo), Davide (Plastic Surgery Tattoo) and Phil Kyle and Adrian Willard (Magnum Opus Tattoo)."

It might be a small group at the moment but it is a respectable group, clearly showing that Samez has made her mark on some important tattooists. Samez explains her concept of Proud, the passion evident in her words.

"Proud is not about being the best artist around or bullshit like that. It's about having respect for what we are doing, trying to give our best contribution to the tattoo world. It's about spreading the pride we feel and making our customers understand that getting a tattoo is a very important thing in your life. It's not about fashion!"

And then comes the big point, the one that seems to rile most old school tattooists but seems to becoming more and more evident these days:

"It's important to be able to draw your own stuff. No tracing! A tattoo artist has to have their own style. Be recognisable. Then a customer can choose them for that important reason."

It's clear that Samez loves her work, that she is passionate about it and when I ask Samez about her style, the words come quick and easy once again.

"It's always difficult to put ones personal style in a category. I do traditional but traditional according to me. And sometimes I get a little close to the new school stuff. So it's neo-traditional? Anyway I have a changeable mind and at the moment I'm trying to make my own stuff more traditional. I love tattooing in general and trying to be a versatile artist is really important to me.

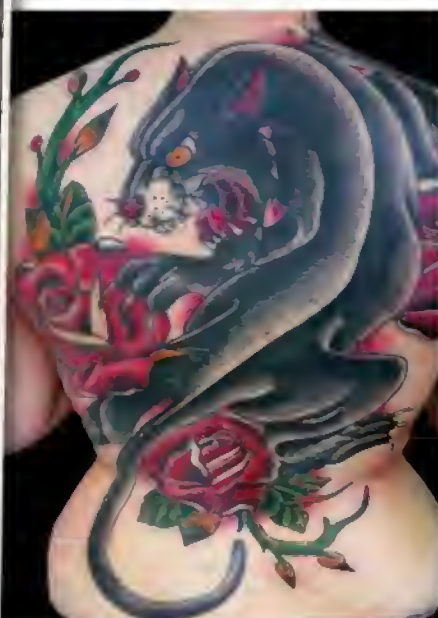
"I take influences everywhere to tell the truth, in art and in other tattooing. One of my favourite artists has always been Chris Conn and I will never stop following him as an illustrator"

The more I talk to Samez, the more I start to see that tattooing is her life, it's in her soul. She takes her work and her art seriously and won't let anyone forget it. Her enthusiasm and pride is catchy and it is easy to see why she is respected as a tattooist and a friend.

I ask Samez, if she could choose one person to tattoo, who would it be? And as I am coming to expect from her, her







**IT'S ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO PUT ONE'S PERSONAL STYLE IN A CATEGORY. I DO TRADITIONAL BUT TRADITIONAL ACCORDING TO ME. AND SOMETIMES I GET A LITTLE CLOSE TO THE NEW SCHOOL STUFF. SO IT'S NEO-TRADITIONAL?**

answer is not one I expected to hear.

"I really want to tattoo Robbie Williams before I die. He's always been my sex symbol since I was about thirteen."

Samez laughs but quickly gets serious again, a trait that I am now beginning to see as very Samez. "And you know, I was really near doing it once. I was in California one time and met him at a football match. He's not so recognisable in America as he is in Europe, so it was very easy to speak to him. We even got some pictures together!"

I can sense Samez's excitement as she tells the story and it's quite infectious. "I knew he really loves tattoos so I told him I was a tattoo artist and invited him to come to the Ink & Iron Tattoo Convention that was happening in a few days in Long Beach. He told me that if had some free time he would come along...but it didn't happen! I am still waiting for his phone call..."

On the other side of the coin, I ask Samez if there is anything she wouldn't tattoo and from the short silence, I can tell that this is going to be as big a revelation as the Robbie Williams crush a moment before.

"You know, I believe in God but I am against the church. So I really wanted to tattoo a nun with a penis on their hand." I had to stop Samez at this point to clarify her answer. Did she actually tattoo a penis on a nun or is this an image she created? She tells me it was the latter and a part of me is a little disappointed.

And that is Samez in a nutshell, willing to push the boundaries of the art form while staying true to herself. I



think her mentor Sid sums her up better than I ever could:

"One time Samez came over to my house and cooked a huge Italian meal for my family and I! It was so good! That girl's got skills in tattooing and cooking. So if you're ever in Rome, stop by her shop and get a tattoo and then invite yourself over to her house for dinner! Samez reminds me of an old tattoo soul - she has respect for the industry, respect for other artists, and always gives credit where credit is due.

She has respectfully worked her way to being the artist she is, which is difficult to find these days in our industry."

If you want to catch Samez on the circuit in early 2011, she will be tattooing in January at the Star of Texas Tattoo Convention in Austin, then she is over to the UK for the Brighton Convention (her first time at Brighton), back over to Italy for the Milan Tattoo Convention in February and then the one convention she will never miss, the Rome Tattoo Expo in May. ★



## ROBBIE WILLIAMS

**That phone call can't come soon enough for Samez. Robbie might not appeal to everyone but he knows his tattoos.** He has around fourteen tattoos in total, ranging from lettering to celtic crosses and religious imagery. His left arm sports a partial sleeve, a Maori tribal tattoo by Te Rangitu Netana, which tells the story of Williams's life. The tattoo was done in the studio of famous Dutch tattooist, Henk Schiffmacher. I kinda get the feeling Williams will be kicking himself for passing up the opportunity that day he met Samez.



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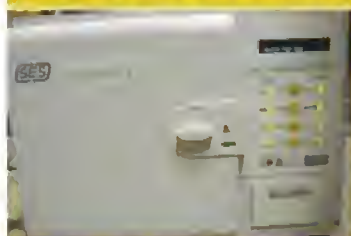
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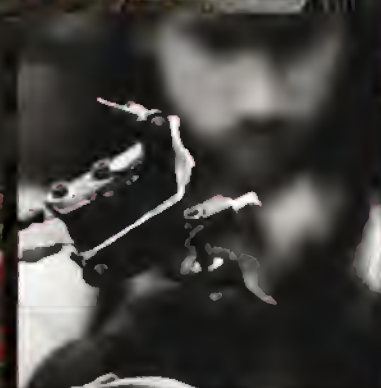
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TATTOO NUMBING

Artists CHERYL & LEE









RIGHT: AL @ ALZONE, L: NICK B. @ BULLION



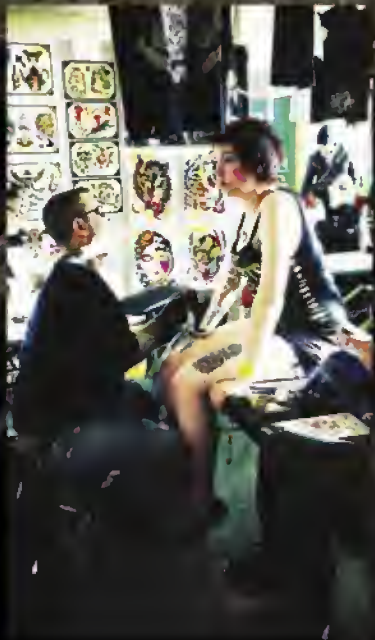
KATE BY BILLY HAY @ CUSTOM INK, SCOTLAND



EMMA BY PETE @ PETE'S TATTOO, LUTHAMPTON



LEZZIE, BY BEZ @ TRIPLE SIX STUDIOS, SUNDERLAND



PETE BY NIKKO, IGNITION TATTOO, USA



MAD ALAN BY XED LE HEAD @ VINE CANYON, LONDON



# MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER CENTRAL 6TH - 7TH MARCH 2010



COLIN BY MARK BAILEY @ GOLDEN DRAGON, CHESTER



CHLOE BY ANAEL @ ANAEL TATTOO, POLAND



LEE BY PAUL OWEN @ NAUGHTY TATTOO, USA



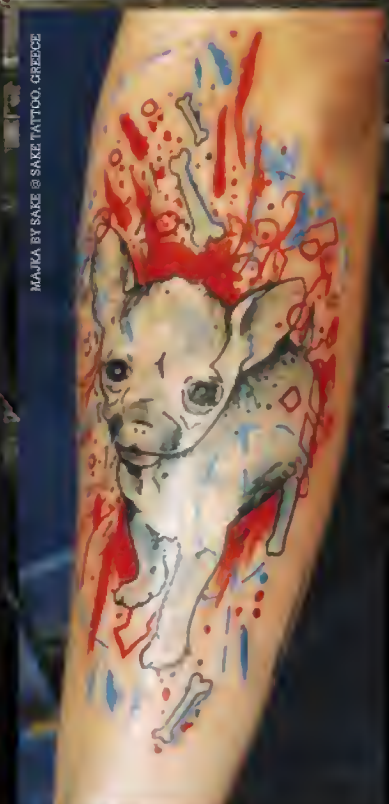
LIVEZ BY GEORGE MAVRIDIS @ TATTOOLIGANS, GREECE



ANDREZ BY TOMASZ KULROWSKI @ TTT STUDIO, STAFFORD



ABBEY BY LEIGH DALE @ STUDIO ODYSSEY, ORMSKIRK



MAJKA BY SAKA @ SAKA TATTOO, GREECE



# INK & IRON

THE TOWER 11TH APRIL 2010



DAVID BY LEE CLEMENTS @ CHAMELEON, WALES



ADAM BY LEE CLEMENTS @ CHAMELEON, WALES



TATTOO BY AMANDA WEST @ ALZONE, GLOUCESTER

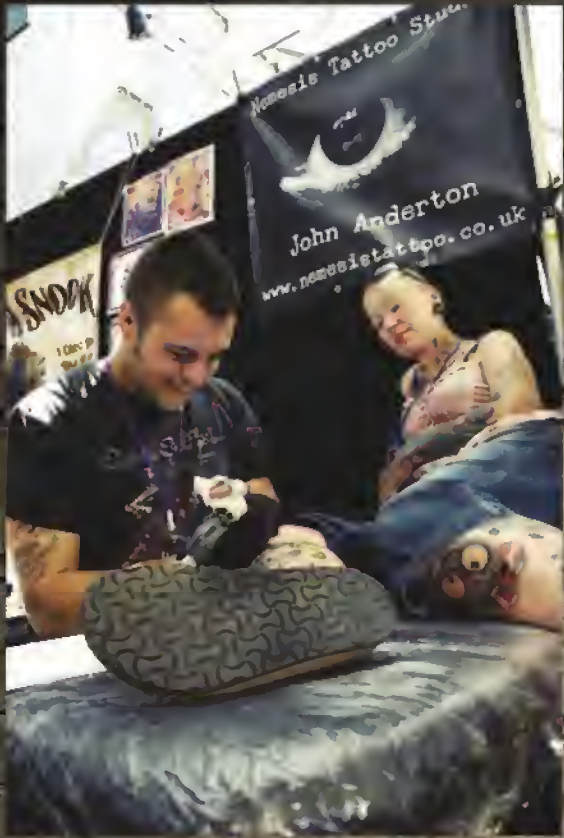


SARAH BY JAMES WOODY'S TAT @ OS HIGH LIFE



AMIEE BY TOMMI @ NO REGRETS, CHELTENHAM





DAMIAN BY SEBASTIAN @ TATTOO GONZO, POLAND



JADE BY MISS MINDY, STUDIO XIII, USA



AUDY BY ROY PRIESTLEY @ SKINSHOCK, BRADFORD



NEAL BY JAMES @ RAY @ BRIGHTSIDE TATTOO, COPENHAGEN



MARCUS BY KYLE CUTTERMAN @ SMARTBOMB TATTOOS, USA



DARREN BY FUCKING FAT, SPAIN



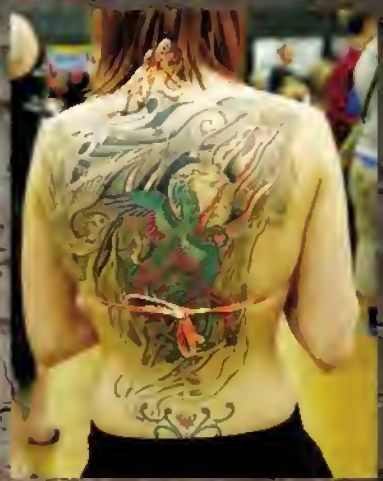
ABI BY MARCUS MAGUIRE @ CUSTOM INC, SCOTLAND





# READING

RIVERMEAD LEISURE COMPLEX 20TH JUNE



# NORTH LAKES

SHEPHERDS INN, CARLISLE 17TH - 18TH APRIL 2010



ADAM BY MARIUSZ @ MIAMI N ROLL TATTOO, OLASOOW



CLAIRE BY BILLY HAY @ CUSTOM INK, SCOTLAND



WOYTECH BY MARIUSZ @ ROCK N ROLL TATTOOS, OLASOOW



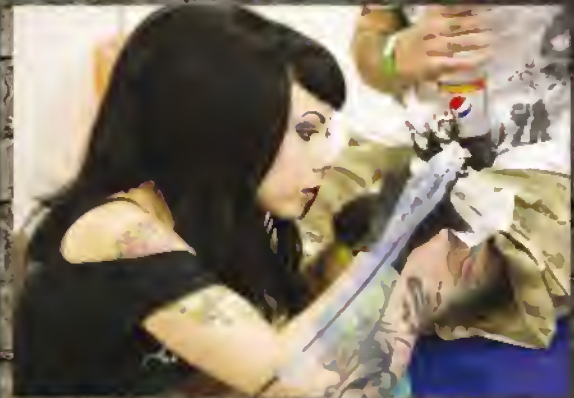
JULIE BY CHRIS GARVER @ MIAMI INK, USA





# TATTOO JAM

DONCASTER RACECOURSE 6TH - 8TH AUGUST 2010



LAUREN BY ORGE AT SAGE



MARIE BY MARGIN AT ROCK AND ROLL TATTOO



MARIE BY MARGIN AT INDEPENDENT



PATRICK BY BILLY THE BASTARD AT CUSTOM INC. GLASGOW



# DERBY

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS 17TH - 18TH JULY 2010



JOHNNY SPARKS BY LHM AT LIFETIME TATTOO DERBY



KELLY BY ADAM NELSON INK



MAEYER BY STEVEN



BY KEN AT 7TH JAY DERBY



MARY BY AMANDA WEST AT ALZORE TATTOO GLOUCESTER

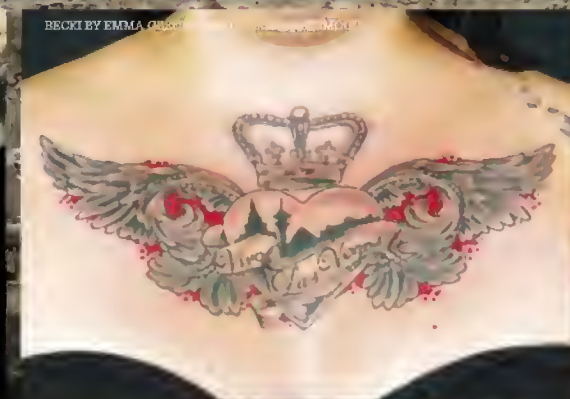


# NEWPORT

NEWPORT CENTRE 2ND - 3RD MAY 2010



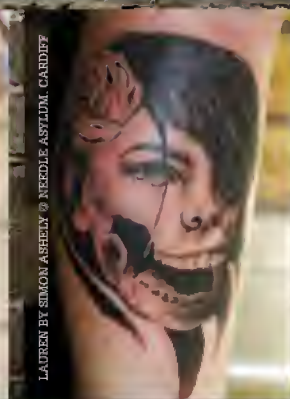
MATTHEW BY CHRIS HARRISON @ ROAD WARRIOR



BECKY BY EMMA GIBSON



LISA BY LEE CLEMENTS @ CHAMELEON TATTOO STUDIO BARRY

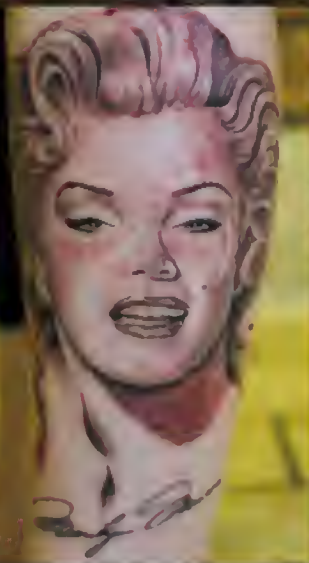


LAUREN BY SIMON ASHELY @ NEEDLE ASYLUM CARDIFF



# NU ROSE TATTOOS

LUCY BY CHRIS GOYER @ NU ROSE TATTOOS SWANSEA

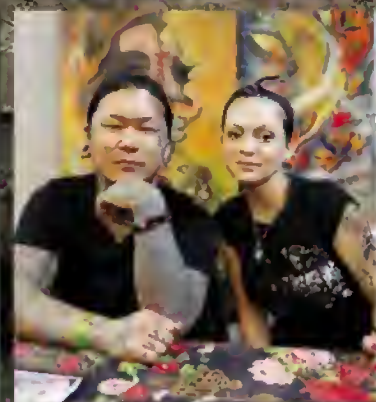
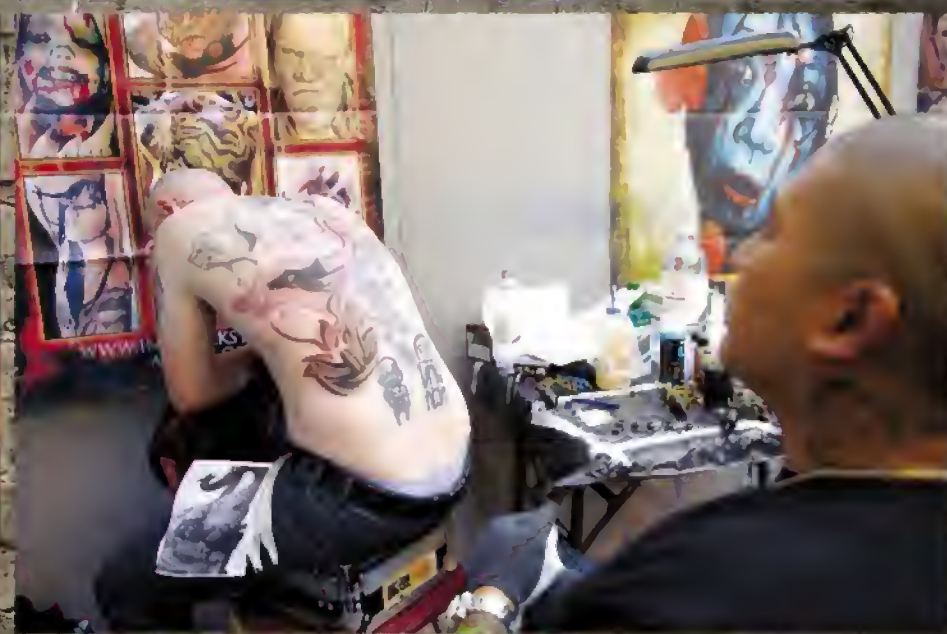
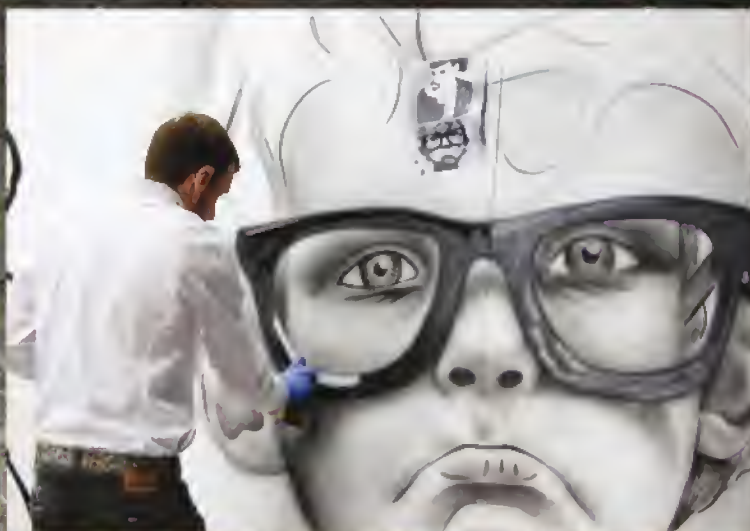
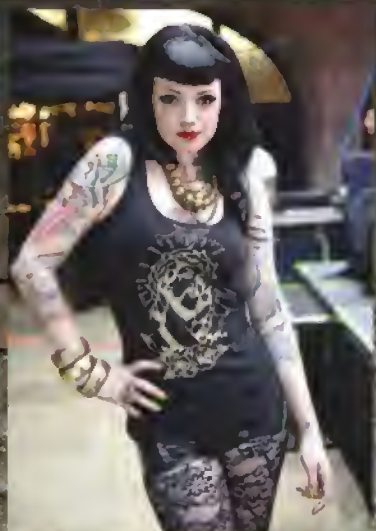


SAM BY PATRICK HUETTINGER @ TATTOO MAGNON SWITZERLAND



# LONDON

TOBACCO DOCK 24TH - 25TH SEPTEMBER





# COVENTRY

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ADAM FINEBY @ FINEBY @ INFINITE INK (MALE SMALL WINNER)



# PETERLEE

LEISURE CENTRE 28TH MARCH 2010



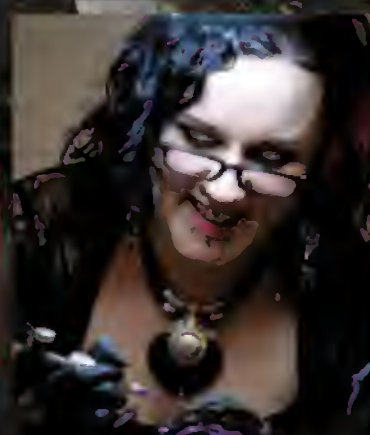
PECKY BY MARK @ MARKED FOR LIFE



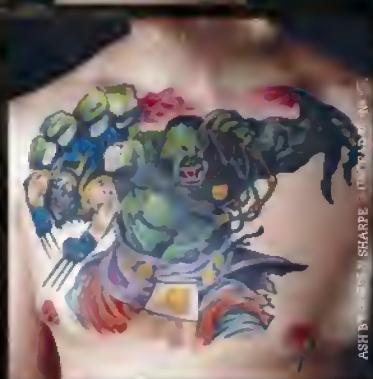
JULIE BY BEZ @ TRIPLE SIX STUDIOS, SUNDERLAND



CLAIRE BY GARY WEDNEHOF @ INCREDIBLE CREATIONS, PERTH



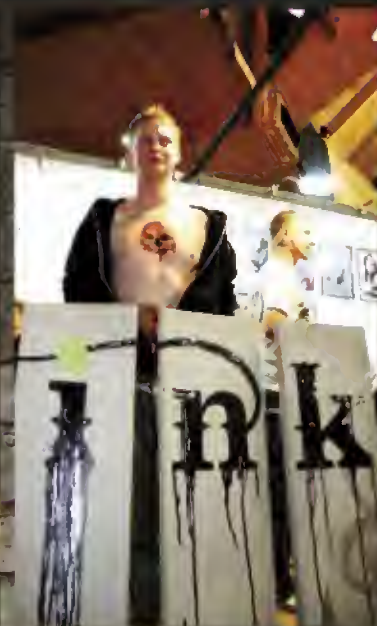
DAMEN BY M @ DARK CIRCLE



ASH BY J @ SHARPE @ TATTOO



KERRY BY TUTTI SERRA © SELF SACRIFICE, LONDON



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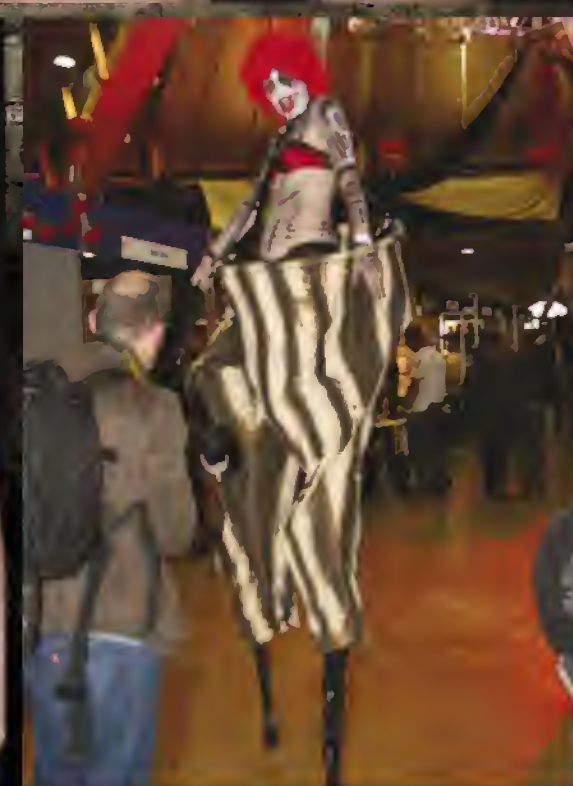
KIERAH BY EUGENE ©TATTOOZ BY DESIGN, SOUTHAMPTON



LILIA BY CASPER © WICKED NEEDLES, SOUTHAMPTON



CATH BY STEVEN POTTON © STEVE'S TATTOOS



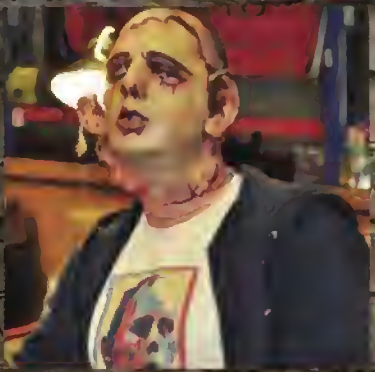


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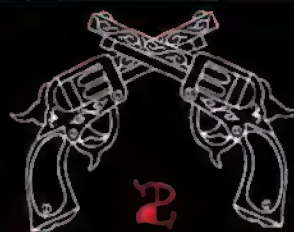


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WORDS: BARBARA PAVONE  
IMAGES: CLUB TATTOO

# WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS...

**Indeed – what happens in Vegas isn't staying in Vegas any longer! From state of the art technology to a rock star co-owner, Club Tattoo sounds like it should be an exclusive club for the tattooed elite.** In reality, the six Club Tattoos that currently exist strive to offer an exceptional and unique customer experience to anyone who walks through their doors.

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“We were one of the first tattoo shops in the world to bring a lifestyle concept to the business,” says Sean Dowdell, one third of the master team behind Club Tattoo. “It’s not just tattooing, it’s not just piercing. What we did was we took the culture of what we were doing and applied it to every aspect, you know?” That meant looking beyond tattooing and piercing to things such as custom apparel and even a “high-end jewellery line that we’re launching this year. Silver and gold bracelets with really cool tattoo-inspired designs. We’re really, truly a lifestyle brand.” The ability to offer a distinct experience

to clients has been a major driving force behind Club Tattoo’s success and may partially be due to the shop’s equally unique roots.

Dowdell first got into the industry in 1995 when he decided to open a tattoo shop to sustain a different career. “I was in a pretty up-and-coming, popular band with Chester,” recounts Dowdell, (that’s Chester Bennington of Linkin

Park, to be exact - Ed). “We were touring quite a bit, so we needed a way to figure out how we could pay our bills when we were on the road and when we came back. Rent and electricity and, you know, bills that just didn’t go away.”

Playing in the band didn’t earn them enough money to cover all of these expenses, so the idea to open Club Tattoo was born. The original plan was just to manage tattoo artists and piercers, but once the shop became a reality and Dowdell was off from touring, he decided to become even more involved. Faced with the difficult decision of learning to tattoo versus learning to pierce, the choice was made by process of elimination. “I did learn how to tattoo and I just realised that I’m extremely competitive







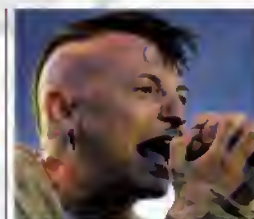
THERE ARE SOME 150 ODD SHOPS IN THE GREATER PHOENIX AREA, WHICH IS TOO MANY. MOST OF THEM ARE NOT GOOD, MOST OF THEM SHOULD NOT BE OPEN, BUT TO EACH HIS OWN AND LET THEM FAIL ON THEIR OWN MERIT.

and when I can't be the best at something, I really don't wanna do it," says Dowdell. "My artistic ability as far as drawing is horrendous, so I just said, 'You know what? I don't wanna half-ass this, so I'll learn how to pierce and see if I can be good at that.'" Tattooing may not have been a success story, but as soon as Dowdell began learning how to pierce, he became hooked. "I really took to it very quickly and enjoyed it, and enjoyed learning the anatomy, and it just kind of became a passion for me."

The first ever Club Tattoo was

opened in Dowdell's home state of Arizona and four more shops followed suit. Just don't expect to run across one in the state's capital. "I think Phoenix is oversaturated with shops," says Dowdell. "There are some 150 odd shops in the greater Phoenix area, which is too many. Most of them are not good, most of them should not be open, but to each his own and let them fail on their own merit."

In addition to Chester Bennington, the other co-owner of Club Tattoo is Thora Dowdell, Sean's wife. "It's something I have to be careful on how



**CHESTER BENNINGTON ON:**

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD TATTOO

A good tattoo to me is one that makes our client beam with excitement or cry because it captured the emotional intent behind the piece.

Also, the best pieces are always original and make people who don't have a tattoo want to get a tattoo.



I answer, right?" laughs Sean when asked what it's like to work with a spouse. "The obvious upside is you have as much time as you want with that person to discuss business. But that's also the biggest downside. We've had to put our own systems in place to not talk business while we're at the house or when we're out on a date."

As for Bennington, his involvement may not have big impact on a local scale, but it has certainly helped in exposing Club Tattoo to a global market. "The majority of our international reaction, sales and business is all stemmed from Chester," admits Dowdell. "He opens a lot of doors that aren't there for most other tattoo shops."

Club Tattoo's success has often been greeted with a negative reaction from other shops, but Dowdell believes it's just the nature of the industry. "When you start to do well in the tattoo business, other tattoo businesses aren't happy for you. I feel that I've done a lot to push the industry in a good direction and I feel like I've given back to the industry, so I feel that sometimes when I hear something negative it's unjustified, you know?"

**CHESTER BENNINGTON ON:**

**BECOMING CO-OWNER OF CLUB TATTOO**

I wanted to become a partner in Club Tattoo for many reasons. Most importantly, Sean and Thora Dowdell. We have been like family for close to 17 years. I love Club Tattoo as much as I love my bands. Sean came to me around ten years ago, after he and Thora had brought Club Tattoo to the top shop position year in and year out ... He asked me if I'd like to become a partner and bring as much attention as I can to the studio.

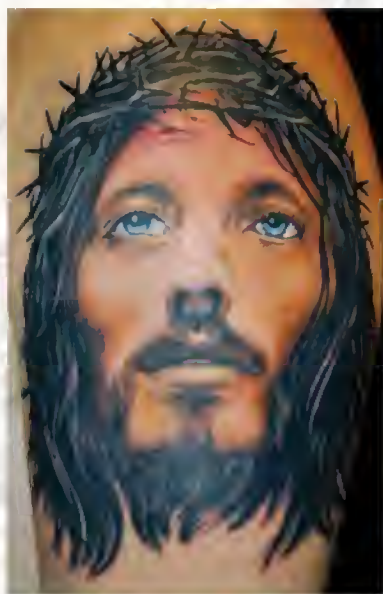
We trust each other completely and it also gives us something to do together outside of music.

I FEEL THAT I'VE DONE A LOT TO PUSH THE INDUSTRY IN A GOOD DIRECTION AND I FEEL LIKE I'VE GIVEN BACK TO THE INDUSTRY, SO I FEEL THAT SOMETIMES WHEN I HEAR SOMETHING NEGATIVE IT'S UNJUSTIFIED

**WALTER FRANK**







WE STARTED WORKING WITH HARD ROCK AND HAD A DEAL IN PLACE AND THEN, SIX MONTHS LATER, THE PALMS OPENED UP WITH HART AND HUNTINGTON IN IT AND THAT WAS A JAW DROPPER FOR US

Some of this negativity has stemmed directly from Bennington's involvement. "Other tattoo shops will be like, 'Oh, they only opened up their flagship store in Vegas because of Chester,' which just isn't true," says Dowdell. "They don't understand the logistics or anything involved in how I run the business. They just attribute all of the success to him."

In fact, the bold move to open up a flagship store in Las Vegas was anything but easy. About six years ago, after the third Club Tattoo opened in Arizona, the decision was made to open in Vegas. "We started working with Hard Rock and had a deal in place and then, six months later, the Palms opened up with Hart and Huntington in

it and that was a jaw dropper for us," says Dowdell.

"We thought we were being innovative and doing things completely different. Meanwhile, somebody beat us to the punch. So hats off to Carey Hart and those guys 'cause they completely opened a lot of doors for a lot of other people that they don't get credit for, by opening that first store in a Vegas casino."

Club Tattoo's roller coaster ride to opening a shop in Vegas continued when The Cosmopolitan approached them next. They signed a lease with Cosmopolitan, but "about a year later, as things were going along great, the housing market crashed and the

**CHESTER BENNINGTON ON:**

### CO-OWNING CLUB TATTOO

The work I do is to expose as many people around the world as possible to Club Tattoo. And show them that it is among the best studios in the world.

I also do special live performances at the stores, cater to VIP clients and have used my status in the music business to open some doors for future locations and worldwide opportunities.



## WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS...



IT REALLY TOOK ME BY SURPRISE,  
THE SCOPE OF WORK THAT PEOPLE  
ARE WILLING TO GET WHILE  
THEY'RE ON VACATION.

**CHESTER  
BENNINGTON ON:**

### **BALANCING MUSIC AND CLUB TATTOO**

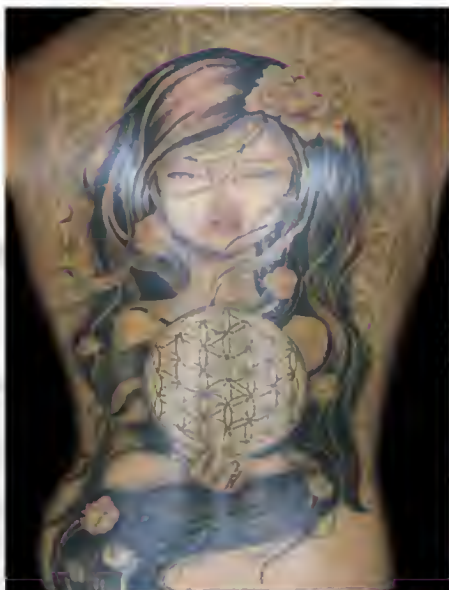
**Honestly, it is not difficult at all. Sean and Thora are the perfect partners.**

They are the life, heart and soul of this company. We are all ambitious and desire the same things. We want Club Tattoo to rise to the top of premier tattoo studios in the world. They work as hard, or even harder, on Club Tattoo as I do on Linkin Park.

economy started to fall apart." The trio behind Club Tattoo made the decision to walk away from the deal as they soon realised things would no longer go as planned. "We did not want to have a bank as a landlord," says Dowdell. "Especially being such a fresh, young tattoo concept, we didn't think that they were gonna get it. And we were right. We took a meeting with them and as soon as we started hearing their ideas for our business we said, 'Yeah, this isn't gonna work.'" That's when, in 2007, Planet Hollywood arrived like a knight in shining armor and Club Tattoo finally found a place to call home in Las Vegas. Since the flagship store's opening in 2009, the city has continued to surprise them. "I thought we were gonna do a lot of names and hearts and flowers, a lot of small stuff, but my guys actually do more custom work and full sleeves and full back pieces in Vegas than we







do back in Arizona," says Dowdell. "It really took me by surprise, the scope of work that people are willing to get while they're on vacation."

Which is not to say that those looking to get a small piece of artwork won't be accommodated. "Our guys are there to make the customer happy. We don't have any rock star tattoo artists that are too cool to tattoo your idea," says Dowdell, bringing up what he believes to be a prominent issue in today's tattoo world. "This is a business, it's not driven by our egos - and that's my biggest complaint about the tattoo industry. You're not doing your client a favor by tattooing 'em, that's the absolute wrong attitude to have."

In addition to offering a talented roster of artists and piercers, Club Tattoo has also always prided itself on innovation. A few years ago, Dowdell designed a microdermal anchor for Metal Mafia, patented it and it has since become the top-selling microdermal in the world. More recently, Dowdell collaborated with programmers to design Interactive Tattoo, a screen flash system that can be found in all of the Club Tattoo shops. Interactive Tattoo holds over 109,000 images, from artists' portfolios to flash, and makes it easy for clients to browse potential tattoo designs.

"The way you're looking at the touch screen, it looks like a Ouija board with the alphabet. You'll punch the letter 'A' and every category from 'A' will drop down. You'll see apples, ambigrams, amphibians, arrows, angels and all of ☺

THE WAY YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE TOUCH SCREEN, IT LOOKS LIKE A OUIJA BOARD WITH THE ALPHABET. YOU'LL PUNCH THE LETTER 'A' AND EVERY CATEGORY FROM 'A' WILL DROP DOWN



CHESTER BENNINGTON ON:

## TATTOOING

I have considered tattooing before. I was positive that I'd be working at Club Tattoo if the music thing didn't pan out. I've actually been thinking about training and doing one-of-a-kind pieces for clients who are the highest bidder. Maybe doing one a year, so that the pieces remain very exclusive.



those corresponding designs are in there."

The programme also features a text editor, which allows clients to type text into the system and see it on the screen in all of the available fonts.

It's not difficult to hear the excitement in Dowdell's voice when he describes Interactive Tattoo. "This is something that completely separates our brand from any other shop in the world," he says. "It's truly the most amazing thing on the market. It's gonna change the face of the tattoo industry in the next two to three years, I guarantee it."

Having recently received a second patent on the system, Interactive Tattoo was debuted for sale to the

public at Mario Barth's show in Vegas at the start of October 2010 (reviewed last issue – Ed.). "I kid you not, I probably had 500 shops ask me, 'How can I get this?'" recalls Dowdell.

But innovations aside, the heart of Club Tattoo still belongs to tattooing and piercing. When it comes to defining what constitutes a good job done, Dowdell says it's all about consistency and good blending and shading for tattoos. For piercings, it's the placement and "making sure your piercing doesn't interrupt the natural flow of the face, or wherever it is that you're doing the piercing. It has to aesthetically compliment whatever

part of the body you're dealing with, as opposed to detract from it. I've never been a fan of piercings that are so large that they look out of place."

Looking to the future, Dowdell hopes to continue growing Club Tattoo. A second Las Vegas shop is already in the works and slated to open in the next year. New York, Montreal, Berlin and London may also soon be home to their very own Club Tattoo shops as they are all on Dowdell's hit list.

As I laughingly tell Sean Dowdell that it sounds like he's ready to take over the world he replies, "You know, I hear that too and it's really never been about that. It's just been about [us] trying to do something cool and it's always been about the ride for us. I do hear people go, 'Oh, you're trying to have a monopoly.' Not at all. I figure that we're very lucky and luck has always been just being prepared when opportunity presents itself."

Looks like its time to join the club. ★

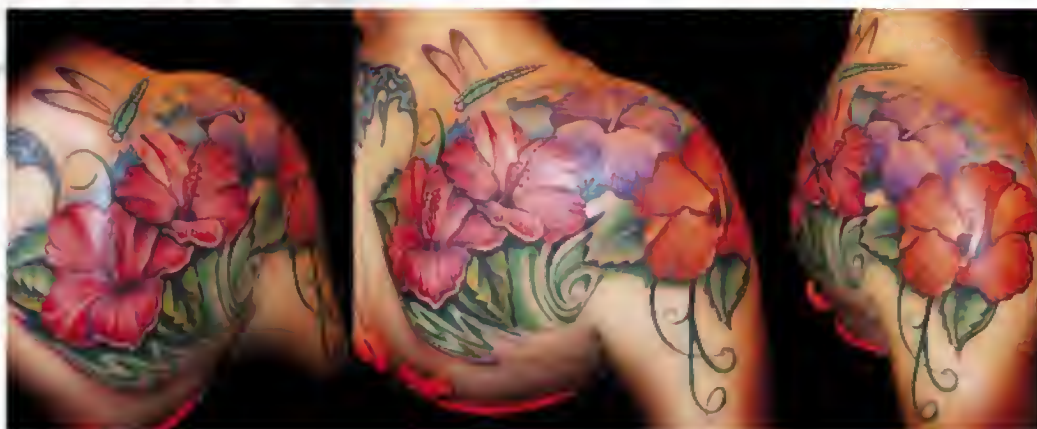
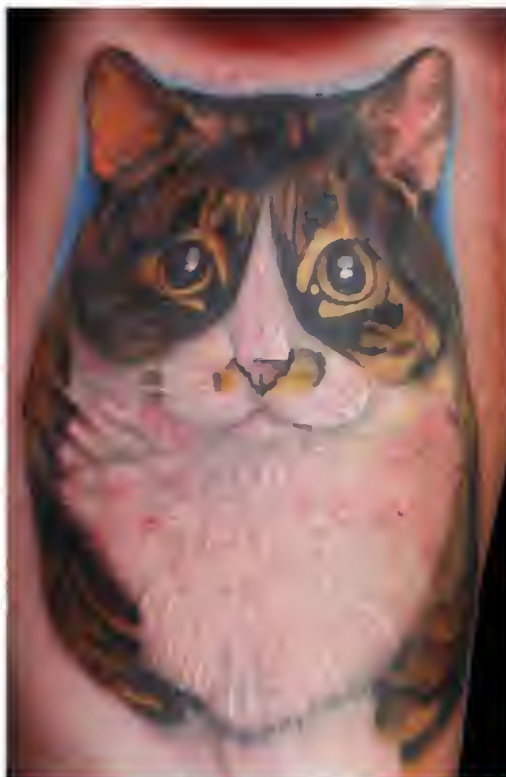
**CHESTER BENNINGTON ON:**

**HIS OWN TATTOOS**

My favorite tattoo is the one across my chest. It has the initials of my wife and I and all of our children.

I love my flames too. I think they may be more famous than me. They have really become a part of my identity. When I meet fans on the street, nine out of ten times someone grabs my arms and asks to see the flames.

**IT'S JUST BEEN ABOUT US TRYING TO DO SOMETHING COOL AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT THE RIDE FOR US. I DO HEAR PEOPLE GO, 'OH, YOU'RE TRYING TO HAVE A MONOPOLY.'**





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## The Unfinished Tattoo

Tattooist Bobby Wood or Il-Bobby, as he was known to his many customers, died on Sunday 7th November, aged 58.

He was one of the first to make tattoos "big in Malta". His sons Isaac and Kaysie, will be keeping the business going. Bobby Wood, one of Malta's first tattooists – known by both those who love and hate the art – passed away suddenly on Sunday 7th November 2010, literally leaving his mark on many.



Bobby a great man, a huge heart, a man you would be proud to have known and had as a best friend, you were like a brother, father and friend all rolled into one and I am so proud to have shared your life. Malta will never be the same now that you have left us Bob.

You worked so hard to achieve all you did in life and in tattooing. Bobby had recently opened the Bugibba complex, which his son said was supposed to be the largest in Europe, fulfilling his ambitious plan to have the biggest studio.

You will be missed so much.

RIP mate up there in your big tattoo studio in the sky. Our love and thoughts go out to Bobby's wife Grace and all his family.

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SCAB VENDOR

WORDS: MAKI PHOTOGRAPHY: FRED PACIFICO

# JONATHAN SHAW



**Jonathan Shaw is a multi-faceted artist living the proverbial gypsy life, based in Brazil, but seemingly on a perpetual adventure.** The son of Artie Shaw and Doris Dowling, his life was never to be one of mediocrity, and associating with the likes of Frank Zappa, Jim Morrison, the Manson family and Bukowski, the scene was set for a life of travelling, debauchery, consumption and creation.

[www.scabvendor.com](http://www.scabvendor.com)

In his 25 years as a tattooist, Shaw cemented his importance in the industry gaining prominence as one of the most progressive artists redefining the notion of tattooing in the West. Apprenticing under Spider Webb, he worked through the prohibition era, and conceived the legendary NY shop, Fun City, and was the editor of International Tattoo Art magazine, which, at the time was known for its intelligent articles with an anthropological and historical leaning.

Having retired from tattooing, Shaw has pursued his dream to write: his first novel, *Narcisa: Our Lady of Ashes* is, to his credit, is a complex and dense masterpiece and is lauded by fans ranging from Jim Jarmusch to Iggy Pop.

We catch up with Shaw at his office on a rock in Copacabana, where he is seemingly enjoying the sun, surf, coconut water and women, whilst writing his autobiography, *Scab Vendor: Confessions of a Tattoo Artist*, amazingly, on his Blackberry. His stories are testimony to a man with a million experiences in a million lands...







**ARE YOU KIND OF DISENGAGED FROM THE TATTOO WORLD NOW?**

I was never that close to the tattoo world even when I was the top dog; I was never actively involved in the tattoo world.

**DO YOU FIND IT ANNOYING WHEN PEOPLE MOSTLY ASSOCIATE YOU WITH TATTOOING?**

Yeah...but y'know, it happens, and then some people just don't understand. Like, "Why did you stop tattooing?" Like, I had committed some kind of crime! I was like, "never mind"; I don't even bother trying to explain.

**AND YOU SOLD FUN CITY?**

Yeah, it was done, like when you finish drinking the water out of that coconut, you are going to throw it away...but if someone comes along and says "I'll give

you a hundred dollars for that" you say, "Sure, take it!" So, that is how Fun City went, it was gone and done. Now I have to write about it and honour the history.

**WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO PUBLISH EVERYTHING?**

The book that I published called Narcisa. Afterwards, I did a year and a half rewrite of it, and by the time I was done with the rewrite with the editor, the publisher had folded. And so then I found another publisher wants it, but they haven't told me when they want to put it out. I figure in the next year. But nothing is for sure in this business. In the meanwhile I'm writing Scab Vendor, and that is a big book. I'm close to being finished with the first draft of the first third of the book. A book in three sections - it doesn't mean its' going to be three books, but there is

going to be part one, two, and three. Part two and three; I just have an outline for it. I have a really very tight draft of the first third, it covers my life from when I was born to my mid-twenties and barely started tattooing.

**WHAT'S YOUR LIFESTYLE, ARE YOU IN BRAZIL HALF THE YEAR?**

No, no, I'm here all the time. Over the last several years I started travelling a bit. I would spend a few months away from here, NY, LA, meeting with publishers, doing book signings; I just started doing that the last couple of years. Before that, I was here solid, talking with other writers. I will expect I'm doing more of that as time goes on.

**HOW DID YOU END UP IN BRAZIL THE FIRST TIME?**

I was in Suriname, to the North of Brazil: near Brazil, but it's not Brazil. I got drunk and fell asleep in a whorehouse, and the ship left without me in this place in the middle of nowhere. I went with some smugglers who gave me a ride to the north of Brazil...some adventure!

**I'M WRITING SCAB VENDOR, AND THAT IS A BIG BOOK. I'M CLOSE TO BEING FINISHED WITH THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE FIRST THIRD OF THE BOOK**

**CAN'T BUY ME LOVE**

Only one out of a hundred came with that respect for the art, not just for me. One out of a hundred would get incredible tattoos; the other 99 would get the same that you could get down the street ten times cheaper.

Because I was famous and could charge 500 dollars for a 50-dollar tattoo, people would come to me for the wrong reasons. After a while you lay down with dogs, you start to itch with fleas. And I started to feel like a real prostitute, a whore, 'cause I was whoring out my soul for money, and eventually there wasn't enough money to make me feel good about myself.





### **HOW DID THAT LEAD TO YOU TATTOOING?**

I was just learning to tattoo by hand - I was interested in learning to tattoo, but only made them by hand. But I was interested in the idea of tattooing and when I got to Rio...that was when I first learnt to tattoo.

### **SO WHEN YOU WERE WITH BOB SHAW, WAS THAT AN APPRENTICESHIP?**

That was after. First I came here and started tattooing like a scratcher, an amateur. I had no professional experience but I had an idea about the process. Then I said, "This is what I want to do as a profession", so I went to the States to learn how to really tattoo, and went to try to get someone teach me how.

One thing led to another and I met Bob Shaw and he said, "Come on", so I worked with him for several years. Then after I learnt what I had to, I came to Brazil and started tattooing with some other people. Then I went to New York and worked with Spider Webb.

### **SO YOU WERE IN NY DURING THE PROHIBITION DAYS: WAS IT OUT OF AN APARTMENT?**

Sort of. It was a tattoo shop.

### **DID ANYONE ACTUALLY GET ARRESTED?**

Not from tattooing: Spider Webb did once because he wanted to. He called all the press and then he said he was going to make a tattoo on the steps of city hall and he wanted them to arrest him. It was a publicity stunt, but nah, it wasn't a criminal thing; it was more like selling hotdogs without a license.

Y'know when you were tattooing the yakuza, what were you doing on them? Completely freehand, abstract. They were the best customers I ever had. If everyone was like them, then maybe I would have never quit tattooing. Because they would just say, "Do whatever you want". So I didn't even use a pen, I would just take a tattoo machine.

### **HOW DID PEOPLE REACT TO YOUR DECISION TO LIVE IN BRAZIL?**

When I moved, people are like, 'He went crazy and moved to Brazil; he is living with the Indians in a grass skirt, sitting in a tree, playing the flute'. And then I came out with the first book and the first book was like, 'What the fuck?' It wasn't about tattooing, it was a violent, crazy love story set in Rio de Janeiro.

All this violent stuff - favelas, drugs and prostitution, debauchery - not tattooing. I have different fans today. I don't care much for my fans from the tattoo days - I thought they were stupid. But the fans of my books are really smart, so I must be doing the right thing - I chose doing what I love.

I wasn't happy with myself as a tattoo artist. I was pretty good, but I was good 'cause I had a vision, but there were people much better than me, technically. I had vision, and I tried to put that into the tattooing, so that is why it is different.

Most people didn't really appreciate that; they didn't know what I wanted to do. At the end they just wanted to get tattooed 'cause I was famous. So, I was like, 'Oh, you want to get tattooed by me for all the wrong reasons, so give me a thousand dollars, I'll do you a fucking little tattoo'...and they would!

I got addicted to that; I became a pirate, just taking their money, and I did that for ten years and I couldn't look at myself in the mirror. I had some money so I came to Brazil and I lived off that money for about 9 years till it ran out. I wrote books, and wrote and wrote, and wrote, and wrote. I helped a lot of people too, and then the money ran out, and I'm still writing the books. I just signed a contract for a new book which still isn't finished, but the publisher gave me an advance, enough to live on.

### **HOW LONG WERE YOU DOING THE TATTOO MAGAZINE?**

I pretty much started the first tattoo magazines; it started with an existing biker magazine to give it a more tattoo vibe. So they hired me to be their tattoo

liaison, and I did that for a few years. Some publisher came to me and they said, "We want you to start the first tattoo-only magazine, and we want you to manage it, to be the top editor and for it to be your baby", and I said, "Sure". And I did that one, which was International Tattoo Magazine, and I did that for about three years.

### **DID YOU SELL IT?**

No it was never mine, it belonged to the publisher and I was the managing editor and I was supposed to have complete editorial control. But I was always an underground guy, I was a tattoo artist, working from a handshake kind of thing, so I had no corporate experience, and they fucked me, 'cause that is what they do. I didn't have a lawyer, I didn't have any of that shit; I just did it 'cause I thought it was cool. They wanted to change the editorial policy, to this and that, and I was like, "No, that is against my principals 'cause I am an old school tattoo guy." And they were like, "This is money", and I was like, "Fuck you", and they were like, "Fuck you, and you have served your purpose, and now we are taking the magazine away."

### **DO YOU MISS THE CYCLICAL DEADLINES?**

That was the thing about tattooing also...immediate gratification, that is the big difference between that, and ☺

## **I PRETTY MUCH STARTED THE FIRST TATTOO MAGAZINES; IT STARTED WITH AN EXISTING BIKER MAGAZINE TO GIVE IT A MORE TATTOO VIBE. SO THEY HIRED ME TO BE THEIR TATTOO LIAISON AND I DID THAT FEW A FEW YEARS.**







## VOCATION

**Now what I do, I don't do for money; quite the contrary, I spent all my money and only now in the last couple of years have I seen some support that tells me to go on.**

But I'm not doing this for money - I would do this for free. If I won a billion dollars tomorrow in the lottery, I could sit back on a yacht and jerk off for the rest of my life; I would keep doing exactly what I'm doing... the money wouldn't change that at all.

what I do now, 'cause what I do now is write, and write.

### HAVE YOU BEEN TO JAIL?

A few times, but not recently...not in this reincarnation. In the States, a few times when I was a teenager; I was always in jail as a teenager. I was a troubled, confused kid. Later in my 20s, I used to drink heavily and take a lot of drugs, and back in those days I would have run-ins with the law, but not since I was sober, for the last 20-something years.

### WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT THING ABOUT KEEPING SOBRIETY?

When I first got sober, it was everything. I drank for the effect because I didn't like the world or my perception of the world when I wasn't fucked up, and I didn't like myself very much. The world wasn't acceptable to me when I wasn't drunk. I had to stop that 'cause it was killing me. I didn't know anything about living in the world without altering my perception and being ok. So that was like really having

to die and be reborn and learn life from zero. At the beginning it was difficult.

### AND DOES THE WRITING HELP?

For me it's the key. Because it's a journey of self-discovery, it's a spiritual practice to me: it's religious. To discover

some personal changes, big changes, almost die and be reborn to overcome that, and I don't think it's coming back.

### WHY IS WRITING SO EFFECTIVE AS OPPOSED TO PAINTING?

Everybody is different. We are on a path of discovery, and I feel fortunate to discover what works best for me. It's not the only way, but it's the best way I found to practice these principals in my life and it's almost like alchemy for me, in

**I DON'T DO IT FOR MONEY; QUITE THE CONTRARY, I SPENT ALL MY MONEY AND ONLY NOW IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS HAVE I SEEN SOME SUPPORT THAT TELLS ME TO GO ON.**

whatever I can and share it as well as I possibly can for the benefit of everybody, but especially myself, to find my place in a universe where I was lost. So the writing is the key.

### DO YOU EVER GET WRITER'S BLOCK?

Yeah, I had it for 20 years. Now I never have writer's block again and I hope I never do. For me, writer's block is the worst thing that can happen to a writer!

It would be like if you were a surfer who had surfer's block, a photographer that had photographer's block. The writer's block for me was like a curse. A spiritual curse, and I had to go through

my conscious and life experience and in my unconscious and my memory and my past and life experience, there is a lot of fucked up shit. Being a drug addict, coming from a home of alcoholism and drug addicts and abuse, being on the street from very young, and living as a homeless teenager, and being a criminal.

All that stuff has roots and upholds darkness, so I have all these memories, I have all this history and baggage and most of it is ugly and poisonous and bad. Through the writing it is a magical process of alchemy where you can take all this shit and turn it into gold. ★





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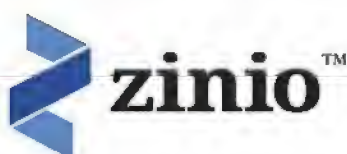
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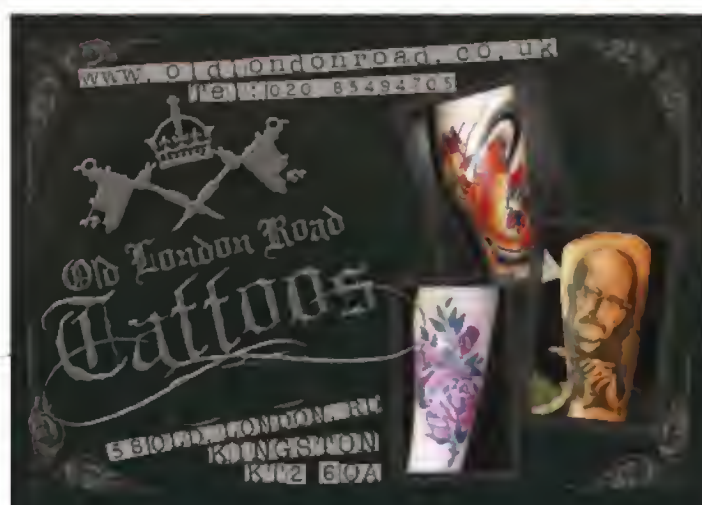
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# THE TATTOO REPUBLIC

The fall of communism meant the uprising of an exciting counterculture in the Czech Republic. One particular Prague-based tattoo studio was there from the beginning and helped lead the way for a tattoo republic...

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**B**efore Elvis, there was nothing. So a great man once said of the pre-Presley era for popular music, and certainly, a similar dictum could be applied to a pre-89 Czech Republic and its absence of a vibrant counterculture: a tattoo culture.

Though a very young country, the Czech Republic has grown, evolved and flourished since the 'Velvet Revolution' in 1989, which saw half a million protestors bringing about the end of the communist Czechoslovakia. Since the fall of the communist regime, a freer and wholly independent Czech Republic has seen its fair share of changes, from the paranoid state it once was, to a diverse, exciting and culturally rich

society. Within a couple of short years of relinquishing the communist grip, the Czech Republic has witnessed its own counterculture emerging in the form of alternative artistic expression. Though the idea of a tattoo culture in Prague would have been impossible just a few years previous, the new Czech Republic allowed for such a counter cultural phenomenon to flourish, and leading the way for this new 'tattoo republic' was a little studio which still sits proudly in Klimentská 2, Prague 1.

Initially focusing on the production and distribution of piercing jewellery, Tribo opened up its first tattoo parlour during the mid-90s and hasn't looked back since. As well as running a tattoo and piercing studio in the centre of Prague, Tribo represent the Czech and Slovakia market for the oldest body



piercing jewellery producer - Wildcat, from Brighton, UK. Like the outbreak of Punk during '77 in the UK, the tattoo counterculture arrived and took Prague by storm, sending it into a whirlwind of frenzied excitement and creative flair - and Michal Burda, Tribo's founder, trail-blazed his way to notoriety when he set up the tattoo studio during 1996, kick-starting the tattoo republic revolution. However, Burda remembers a very different





**WE OPENED OUR FIRST SHOP IN 1996 WITH A FRIEND AND TATTOO ARTIST FROM A SMALL CITY OUTSIDE OF PRAGUE. WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST BODY ART SHOPS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC.**

Czech Republic then, when a certain amount of circumspection and prejudice still surrounded the tattoo culture.

"We opened our first shop in 1996 with a friend and tattoo artist from a small city outside of Prague. We were one of the first body art shops in the Czech Republic, so the general attitude was that we were total freaks. It was really unusual at that time - things like stretched earlobes and multiple piercings, people mainly associated tattoos with criminals."

Certainly, the brand new phenomenon has come a long way since the early days

of the Czech Republic's tattoo culture, and the tattoo scene now remains in stark contrast to what it was just 15 years ago. Burda's tattoo shop wasn't exactly welcomed with open arms when it first dared to take Prague and its frustrated counterculture disciples in scary new directions. With the authorities breathing down their necks, sceptical and resistant to the burgeoning tattoo scene, it wasn't easy for Burda and his band of rebel artists to pioneer a new tattoo movement.

"The tattoo history started in the 90's. You could count the shops on one



hand, and now there are hundreds of them, but very few are good enough to compete on an international level. It was really hard with the authorities while opening the shop. They put a close eye on us and it took lot of energy and paperwork to prove to them that we could do it in a clean and safe way, and that we weren't planning on killing someone or spreading some deadly infection throughout Prague."

Now, 11 years into the new millennium, things have changed dramatically for Tribo and the European tattoo market. While the Czech Republic has changed both politically and culturally during the past decade and a half, the tattoo industry in general has skyrocketed in popularity, infiltrating the mainstream and spreading like wildfire the world over. With various publications, books and websites rife with information on all things ink, it's now almost unfathomable that Michal and Tribo once had to rely on a few

publications that had to be trucked over from Berlin in order to obtain their next tattoo fix. Michal explains:

"It was really hard to get useful information in the Czech Republic in that time. There was no internet and no books published. From time to time a truck driver friend of ours brought us tattoo magazines bought at petrol stations in Western Europe. I was travelling also. Berlin was always a big source for information and inspiration for me."

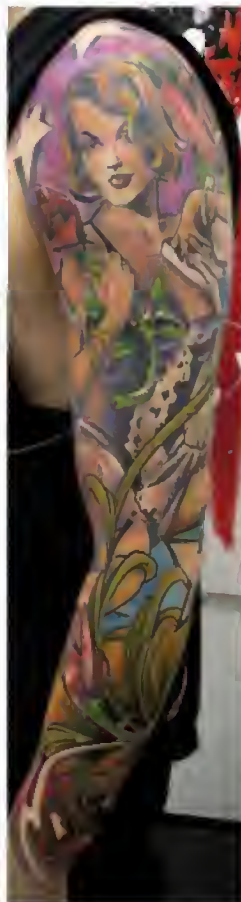
While the communist era now remains far behind them, and despite tattoos enjoying a newfound popularity with a diverse demographic, it's still far from plain sailing for Tribo, but with new challenges lurking around every corner, the Prague-based studio are well equipped for the brave new world of tattooing. Luckily, Michal Burda has a whole slew of talent on tap at the Tribo studio, and Tribo's band of talented tattoo artists - complete with an array of varied talents - remains key to the studio's broad and diverse appeal.

Situated and hard at work behind the doors of the Tribo studio is super-versatile Peter Bobek, an artist who has become renowned for his realism and black and grey, and has since brought colour to the mix which has taken his work to a whole new level. Musa, Peter's apprentice,

**FROM TIME TO TIME A TRUCK  
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BROUGHT US TATTOO MAGAZINES  
BOUGHT AT PETROL STATIONS IN  
WESTERN EUROPE.**







is a young-gun who has been working professionally for just one and half year.

"Musa came out with his really unique abstract aquarelle style, which has attracted many people from all over the world", says Michal. "After attending a few conventions in Western Europe, his work is now becoming very popular and there are many people travelling from abroad to Prague just to be tattooed by him."

Bara, a female artist with more than 10 years of experience, specializes in traditional, Japanese and art nouveau tattoos, while Szabi focuses on new school designs. Tereza attracts the punk and rock 'n' roll clientele with her own unique take on feminine, primitive and traditional tattoos, and Ondrash is currently Tribo's guest artist, of which there have been many.

"We are proud to have had a number of great foreign guest artists coming back regularly to Tribo, and they are a big inspiration to all of us", says Michal. "They include Lionel Fahy ('Out Of Step'), Jef Kostek, Lea Nahon ('Boucherie Moderne'), Sara Rosenbaum, Steven Burlton, Scott Ellis and George Bardadim.

Michal is also particularly proud of acquiring the expertise of one Herbert Hoffman:

"I am very proud that Herbert Hoffman was tattooing at a Tribo booth in Berlin in 2006 for a while, and he tattooed his legendary anchor with date on my arm." He adds, "There is a new school Japanese influenced sleeve that Peter did on our friend Nina. We did photo-shoot with Bet Orten then, and many fashion magazines published these photos and the sleeve has been inspiration for many others. Now Peter is working on her back-

piece. After two sessions it's obvious it is going to be bad ass."

Being one of the first studios to open in the Czech Republic, Tribo has had plenty of time to learn the ropes and establish itself as a leader within the field, and the studio is constantly raising the bar in any way possible. In order to keep a close eye on the competition and stay up to date with the latest progressions, advancements and trends taking place around the globe, the Tribo tribe embrace the convention circuit, travelling to all corners of the globe in order to stay on top.

"I think we started to do the right things early on and we have always been many steps ahead of others within our territory. We started to travel a lot to many tattoo conventions with Peter in 2006 and it opened new doors for all of us. We've met many friends and interesting people, and guest tattoo artists have come to us and took us to new level. We are trying to do good and original tattoos for life. We respect the tattoo tradition a lot but we are also open to new ideas."

With every country following and developing its own style, pursuing its own fashions and motivated by its own individual inspirations, the lessons learnt on the road are invaluable.

"Every country or place has its own specifics. In Eastern Europe there are still popular dark subjects like demons and realistic tattoos, and people are still a little afraid of colours, especially

in smaller cities. In Scandinavia, I saw a very Japanese influence. We love to go back to France every year to Nantes and Paris. What Peter does, the French people find very unusual and exotic, which is weird for us! They have different tattoo traditions than we do."

But travelling also functions as a major eye-opener for the tattooist. Not every convention the world over suggests total professionalism and excellence, and the more you experience, the more you begin to notice the cracks.

"If you travel too much for the conventions you could get easily bored and tired from it. There are a lot of them nowadays and sometimes they can be really bad. Since last year we have slowed down a bit and we are doing only few carefully selected conventions: Doncaster, Paris, Nantes, Brussels and Berlin. We were at Tattoo Freeze and Tattoo Jam last year for the first time and it was great success for us, everything was good and that's why we decided to come back in 2011."

Certainly, the escalating popularity of the industry doesn't equate to consistent quality, as the Tribo team ☺

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COLOURS GETTING HIGHER, AND  
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have discovered during the past 15 years in the business. An over-saturated market has hindered the tattoo business in many ways, with the focus on quick money-making enterprises sacrificing quality for quantity.

"The popularity of tattoos and body art brings a lot of people to the business who just want to make money from it and nothing else. They don't have any relationship with body art and they don't respect tradition: it's just money-making for them and they are doing a lot of stupid things that's killing the tattoo and piercing industry."

While Michal and Tribo hope that the industry continues to prosper, there is a concern for the business, for the tattooist and for the customer, but Michal hopes that the heedful punter will always opt for experience and quality over speed and inferior art, and that those businesses hoping to make a quick buck will buckle under the watchful eye of the

vigilant tattoo enthusiast.

"People will continue getting tattooed with the level and quality of equipment and colours getting higher, and they will have even more freedom of choice. It's really up to them if they prefer cheap prices for shitty tattoos, or if they choose top quality for life. Now there are too many shops everywhere. I hope that the bad ones will disappear."

Emerging from a former communist state and beating out all odds to successfully help to launch a tattoo uprising and managing to stay on top in such a competitive and packed market has been no easy feat for Tribo, but the studio's success is a result of Tribo's simple but effective philosophy: a philosophy that will inevitably see them tattooing productively and successfully for another 15 years and beyond:

"We aim to keep our work at the

highest possible level and to educate the new generation of tattoo artists in our shop. I am not talking just about artistic skills but also about personal integrity, loyalty, respect and friendship. We will continue to do the best tattoos that we can as always."

So finally, what does the future hold for a studio like Tribo? What does Michal have up his sleeve to ensure his studio's well-being and continued popularity?

"I am focused on our shop, gallery and wholesale distribution, and I want to do some good art shows and projects. I am also thinking that in five years or something I want to buy some old industrial space instead of paying expensive rents and build a tattoo ateliers, gallery, shop, maybe a small cafe with a garden, skate mini-ramp, bike workshop; something like a community centre for all of us. We will see."★



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# THE SURVIVOR

**He was born in New Zealand, raised in Tonga, went to high school in Fiji and college in Malaysia. He started tattooing to survive, overstayed his welcome in the States and was forced back to New Zealand.** From these inauspicious beginnings, Carl Cocker at Kalia Tattoo in Auckland is one of the few Tonga artists to take the traditional Polynesian tattoo culture outside of his home country:

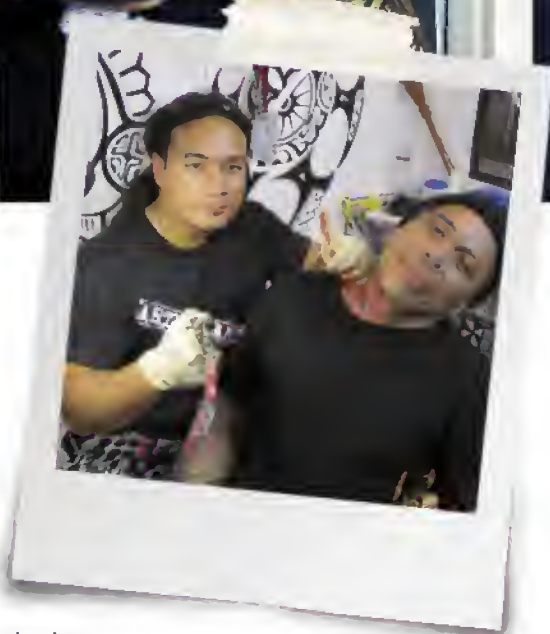
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**K**alia Tattoo lies on a busy street in one of Auckland's southern suburbs - Papatoetoe. It seems to have become the Chinese Quarter since there are now restaurants selling dumplings and fried shrimp everywhere - although KFC and a bunch of car dealerships have also squeezed in making it look somewhat like a typical American city. Inside the studio sits Carl Cocker tattooing a Maori tattoo symbolizing his customer's family of ten children.

The windows and the walls are covered in pictures of Polynesian tribal tattoos and all the people inside the shop are from a South Pacific Island. Carl Cocker himself is Tongan but his tattoo career actually started in Malaysia.

"My dad thought that Asia was the centre of technology so he sent me and my brother to attend college there - also it was cheap. I studied electronics. After me and my brother ran out of spending money we had to do something drastic to get food, so we came up with the idea of tattooing. Asian people stick to themselves - they won't help you if you're hungry. So we started off tattooing ourselves using homemade machines made out of toothbrushes, pens, hangers, sewing needles and a stereo motor with a cell phone charger," he says, showing me the Polynesian tattoos on his legs.

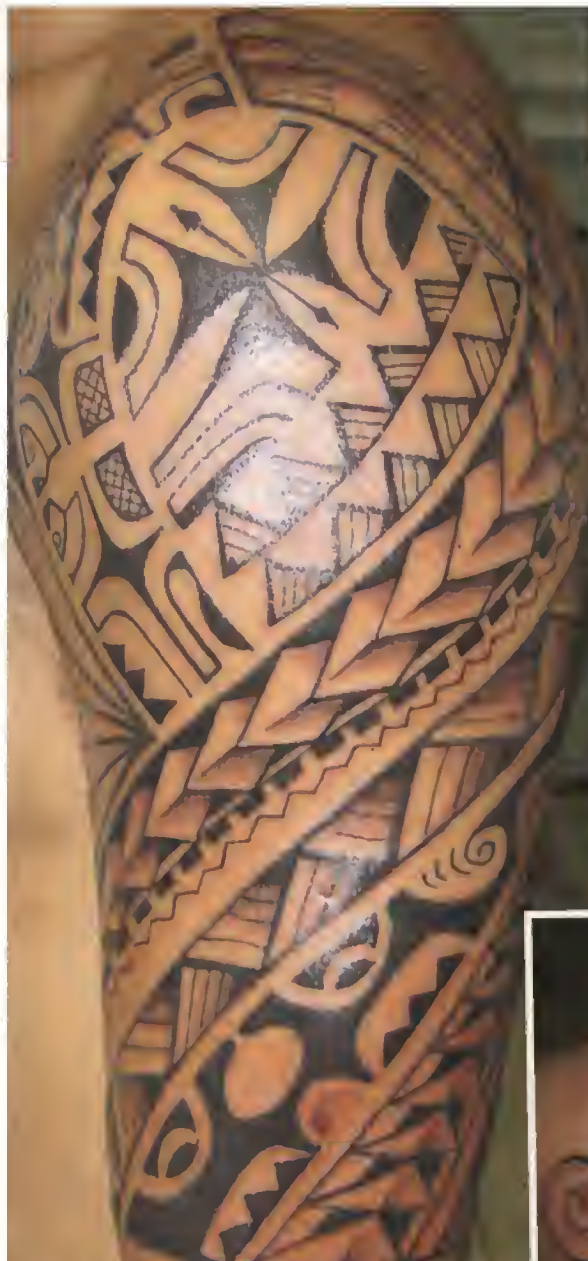
This was 2001 and tattooing had just become legal in Malaysia, so the brothers did well.



"It was starting to get more and more popular. We used our own tattoos as adverts for what we could do and started off charging 10 or 20 dollars. After a while, we found that people would pay 100-150 dollars and that's when I realized I could actually make a career of this."

Although born in New Zealand from Tongan parents, he moved back to Tonga at an early age. His high school years were spent in both Fiji and Tonga before he eventually moved to Malaysia, and after practicing their





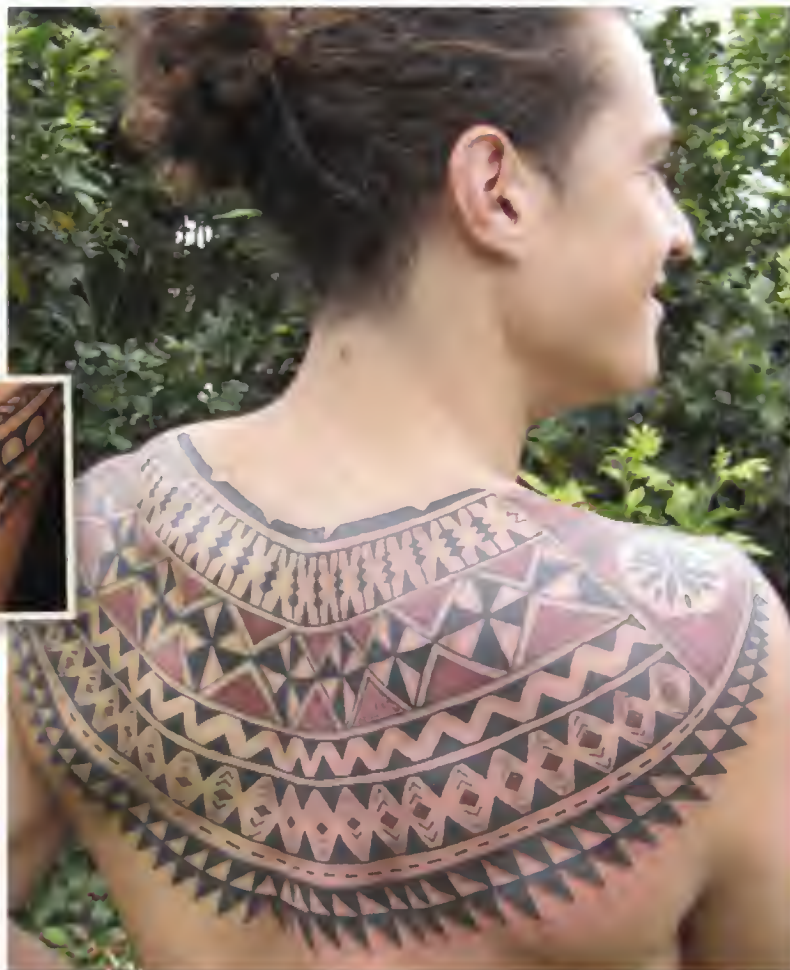
**AFTER A WHILE, WE FOUND THAT PEOPLE WOULD PAY 100-150 DOLLARS AND THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED I COULD ACTUALLY MAKE A CAREER OF THIS."**

new careers for a while, Carl's brother moved on. He now works at Zulu Tattoo in Beverly Hills under the name King Afa. Carl on the other hand met Filipino artist Spec at Zoo Body Art in Kuala Lumpur, who helped him with an apprenticeship.

"He told me to bring in some pictures and when he saw them he said: "If you can do this with a homemade machine, imagine what you can do with a real one". So I saved up money, went to the States and bought a machine. I had no idea if it was good or not, but I brought







it back and he taught me how to use it. I did mostly Asian stuff, like skulls and dragons since Polynesian style wasn't that popular."

Realizing there was much more money to be made outside of Malaysia, Carl went to the USA, but without any luck soon found himself back in his country of birth, but not by choice.

"Nobody took me in and when I went back to Tonga for my son's second birthday, I had overstayed my welcome in the US so they didn't let me back in again. Instead they shipped me off to

**THEY TOOK THE TOOLS AWAY AND THE FUNNY THING IS THAT IF YOU WANT TO FIND A TRADITIONAL POLYNESIAN TATTOO MACHINE TODAY YOU HAVE TO GO TO A MUSEUM IN ENGLAND.**



New Zealand since I had a New Zealand passport, although I'd rather have gone back to Tonga!"

Even so, he decided to stay in New Zealand and met Inia Taylor at Moko Ink who took him in and taught him a lot about the Polynesian style of tattooing. In 2006, he went to the Tattoonesia convention in Tahiti, where he won his first award. After this he left Moko Ink and tattooed from home until he opened up Kalia Tattoo in April, 2009. Now he's spreading the culture of both his home and neighboring island nations from the shop in this Auckland suburb - a culture that was dead for nearly 200 years before it was revived again 20-30 years ago.

"The Christians banned the art of tattooing when they came to the South Pacific. They took the tools away and the funny thing is that if you want to find a traditional Polynesian tattoo machine today you have to go to a museum in England. There are none left in Tonga."

Even though the amount of tattooed people and tattoo artists has increased in Tonga - including Carl's little brother ☺

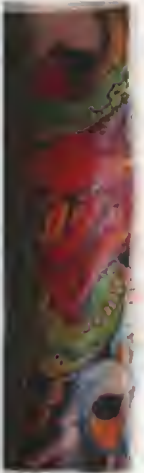




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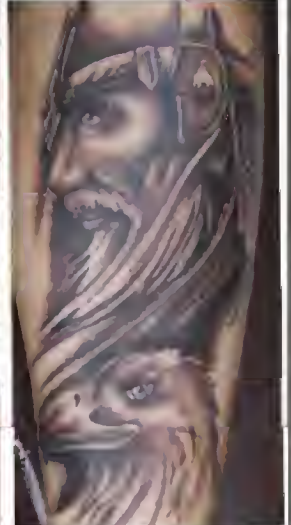
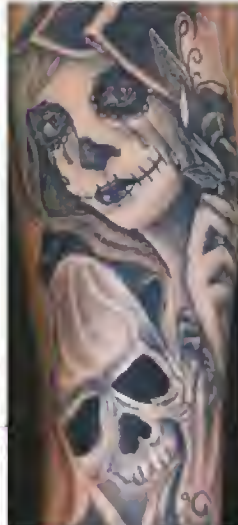
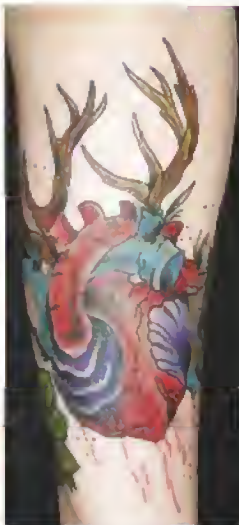
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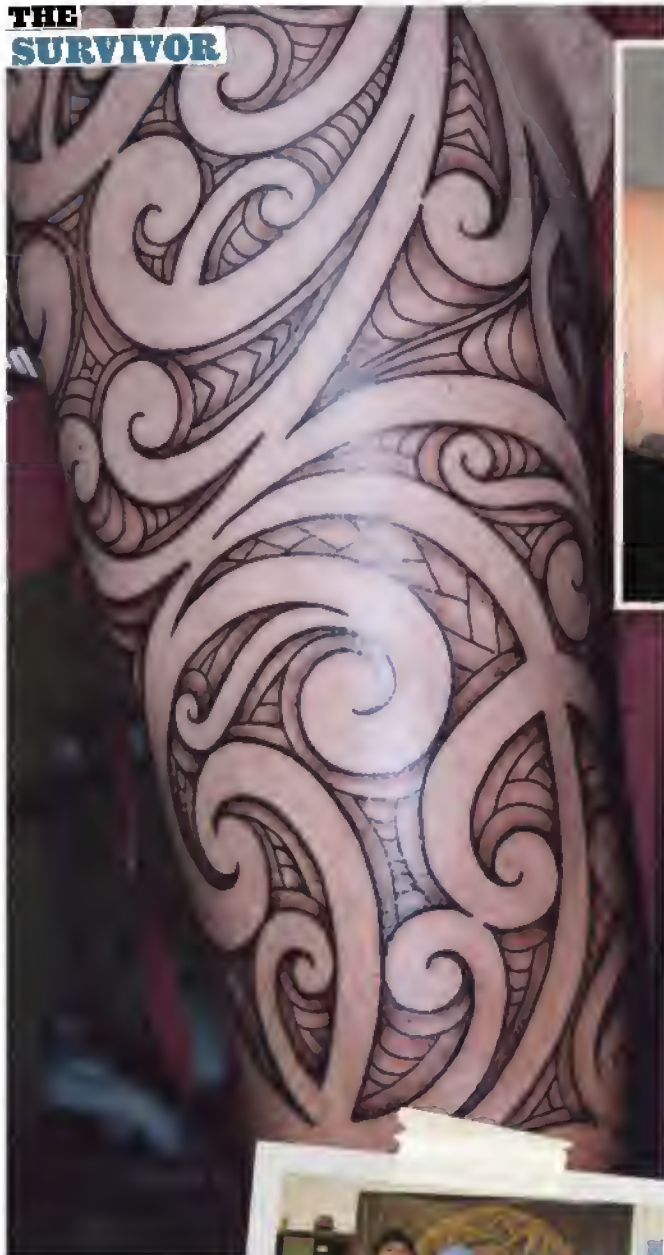
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Papa - the attitude towards tattoos amongst the common man is still a bit on the sceptical side.

"A lot of people go to church and the Christian 'belief' is that tattoos are something you get in jail. It's even like that here in New Zealand. Maoris with tattoos aren't really accepted in some places here, but there are a lot of tattoo artists in Tonga now - however most of them haven't done the traditional styles. More people are doing that now, but it has mostly been done in Hawaii."

He works in all Polynesian styles and

**THE TONGANS WERE THE BULLIES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC AND WE RULED FOR INSTANCE, SAMOA FOR A WHILE, SO WE DON'T KNOW IF WE TOOK THEIR STYLE OR WE GAVE THEM OURS.**

there are similarities and differences between them all:

"One big difference between the two is that in Tonga - and in Samoa as well - you read just the colour, so the tattoos will be more black, but in the Maori culture the gaps also mean something. Patterns are mostly based on family, the ocean, land and weapons. In Maori everything's basically based on what's called koru - which is the symbol for a fern when it starts growing and it looks like this," he says and shows me a part of a tattoo that reminds me of the sign for yin and yang.

"It's a symbol for the beginning of life. The malaia is also common. It's your spiritual guardian on land and in sea, in

the shape of half fish and half bird. In Tonga the spiritual guardian is a man called tiki."

"The Tongans were the bullies of the South Pacific and we ruled for instance, Samoa for a while, so we don't know if we took their style or we gave them ours. Tattooing was also used as a punishment for people held prisoner, so it's hard to say.

One thing is clear though. The ritual of getting half your body tattooed when you become a man at the age of 16 is long gone.

"People are not as strong anymore. Nowadays they wait until they're 30-40 before they get it!" he says with a smirk. ★



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# REVIEWS

If it's a feast for the eyes and tattoo-related, you'll find it here under the microscopic glare of the review page.

Be they Books, DVDs or VHS are all welcome at Skin Deep where judgement shall be passed upon them...at the very least, we'll tell you if they're any good or not.



## LEMMY

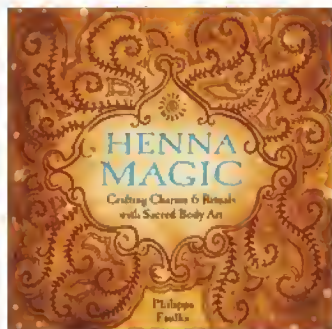
Released 24th January

Everybody loves Motorhead, right? Well, at least we can say everybody has heard of them with authority and to that end we can safely say that everybody has also heard of their ringleader and staunchest defender Lemmy.

This DVD release – hot off the heels of a London Film Festival release – documents the main man in a way that's not been approached before. Shot over the course of three years, Greg Olliver and Wes Orshoski follow Lemmy just about everywhere he will let them, taking in his time in the studio, at home and come up with some great entertainment, thoroughly repeatable quotes and find some surprising fans along the way (including Jarvis Cocker and Peter Hook).

What makes the movie work – where others don't – is based in the authenticity that makes Lemmy the recognizable personality that he is. A lot of rock stars think they tell it like it is, and for the most part they may do, but when words come out of Lemmy's mouth, it's uncensored stream of consciousness – he means every word at the time it was said. It may change later but that's hardly the point and that really comes over in the film. If ever a man could say he just turned 'himself' into his job, this is him – and when it comes to commentaries, it's really strange to see the fans saying exactly the same thing as such icons as Dave Grohl, Slash et al.

The DVD is released to the masses on 24th January – just after their new album. You know what to do... it's Time To Play The Game.



## HENNA MAGIC

Philippa Faulks  
Llewellyn/Llewellyn.com

Everybody knows somebody who's been on holiday and scored themselves a henna tattoo – the tales are probably endless.

Likewise, we've all seen some of the great work that can be put on using henna when done properly. Henna Magic doesn't really drift down either of these paths but it's worth mentioning up front here as there's some valuable advice throughout about good henna/bad henna, what sometimes gets added to it sometimes to make it bad and so on. That alone is worth committing to memory.

That said, Henna Magic is pretty much about what it says it is – the ritual application of henna. Faulks knows her subject well covering the history of henna throughout the ages before gently drifting into designs for different ritual applications, which body parts are used and why.

Looking at the book from a tattoo perspective, if you're an artist who specializes in this domain or one who likes the semi-permanence of henna for bodily decoration, the book is loaded with advice and more importantly, genuine meanings behind some of the more popular designs out there.

It even gives advice on the removal of henna once you're done with your design. Sadly, it doesn't tell you how to get it off the bathroom carpet before your folks tan your hide the same colour.

Maybe that's something of a right of passage that we simply all need to go through.



## KILL THE DEAD

Richard Kadrey  
HarperCollins £14.49

This is Kadrey's second novel in his "cool as hell" Sandman Slim sequence (the first not surprisingly called "Sandman Slim"), and it doesn't disappoint, but first a little background.

If Richard Kadrey's name is not familiar to you, then maybe it should be. Well known as a writer of novels and articles for magazines such as WIRED, he also knows his art inside out and his work at kaosbeautylink is well known in the tattoo world as being some of the most imaginative around.

But enough of that – we're here for the book this time around. In Kill The Dead, our intrepid hero James 'Slim' Stark, returns for another round of killing things. Mostly things that should be dead already or are dead and just need killing again. It's totally over the top mayhem and anybody who loves an irreverent monster show like Supernatural and the likes of Felix Castor and Harry Dresden will be into it from the off.

Hooking up once more with the angelic hit-squad The Golden Vigil as Lucifer comes to L.A. to oversee a biopic of his life, Lucifer hires Slim as a bodyguard but why L.A. is suddenly awash with zombies is anybody's guess.

Apparently, there's a film in the works which is good news all round. I'm really pleased I could justify hosting a review of his new book here. Kadrey is one of the good guys with an absolute skinful of tats to boot. Check it out. Spread the word.



## COME AND PLAY WITH US

Cindy Frey  
www.cindyfrey.com

My, my – this is a curio that's right up my street. You know you're in for a treat when there's a disclaimer on the first page saying that no children or animals were harmed in the making of the book.

In the latest of her visual projects, photographer extraordinaire Cindy Frey takes us on a journey of disturbing extremes. A posting on facebook asking for children (and their parents!) to volunteer for the project led to a total wipeout in submissions to the point where Frey had to start rejecting them.

What Frey has put together here is a great (gothic) coffee-table visual feast of children in macabre and haunting situations. With glorious nods of the head to movies such as The Omen and Children of the Corn, she also calls on her own demons to play with resulting in some truly disturbing works.

The most intriguing aspect of the book is how few people are able to revel in the irony and contradiction that's been embraced in the production and therein lies its power. Gored up kids with bloodied knives, guns, chainsaws and baseball bats may sound crass but Frey is totally in control of what she sets out to create and I'm wishing I'd had the time to check out the exhibition that went along with the books launch.

Probably not a book for everybody to laud over, but you know in your heart whether you're going to dig this or not. It's certainly something that will be visibly kicking around my house for quite some time.



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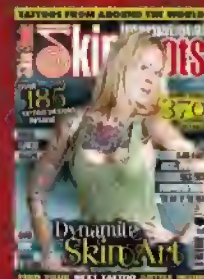
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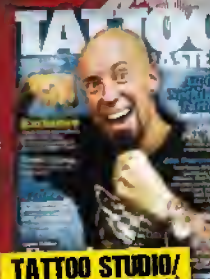
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**JOB WANTED:** My name is Toni-Lou, I'm 26, female, from the UK. I've been tattooing since 2003, the past three years in Australia. My visa is running out at the end of the year and I'm keen to move onto America, Canada or back to Europe in 2011. I love working within B&G realism, animal portraits and American neo-traditional but consider myself a competent, clean all-rounder. My online portfolio can be viewed at; [www.facebook.com/tlou.tattooer](http://www.facebook.com/tlou.tattooer). Please let me know if your studio has a spot for me! Send the details of what you have available through the facebook account or [t-lou-tattoo@hotmail.com](mailto:t-lou-tattoo@hotmail.com). Thanks for your time, hope to hear from you soon!

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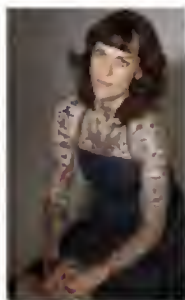
**TATTOOIST AND APPRENTICE:** needed for studio coming soon in Twickenham area. Were a established business thats expanding and in need of more good reliable staff. No drink, drug or attitude problems, The position will be open before summer, a portfolio is needed. Please e-mail to arrange a interview, stating which position your applying for. [matttattoouk@fmail.net](mailto:matttattoouk@fmail.net)



## IN AT THE DEEP END

MUSIC, MAGIC  
AND TATTOOS

**I've just got back from ATP's Nightmare Before Christmas music festival - I'm still wearing the wristband - and my head is full of what for me was the stand-out performance of the weekend, Daniel Higgs.**



Paula Hardy Kangelos

My interest in tattoos was merely embryonic when Daniel Higgs stopped tattooing, giving it up in order to better concentrate on his music, firstly his band, Lungfish and later on his solo projects too. Turning his back on dermal art, despite an obvious talent has made the Higgs name that of a kind of folk legend; his simple story seems so strange as to be almost unbelievable. To leave the world of tattooing is considered utter madness, we are all aware of the immense effort, hard work and perseverance required to obtain and complete an apprenticeship and the majority of us believe tattooing to be a vocation rather than a job, so for someone to give that up, someone talented and celebrated for their tattoos and art, someone so admired is peculiar. Dan Higgs wasn't just any old tattooer, he was a very good one, possessing a distinctive style and attracting critical acclaim and sharing magazine space with such luminaries as Alex Binnie and Don Ed Hardy. It's incredibly unusual to hear about people walking away from tattooing, its permanence isn't wholly summed up by marks in the skin; our relationships and love affairs with the art are just as long lasting as its inky traces. It's like a marriage and it's hard for many of us to suppose what could break such strong bonds apart.

It's easier for us to imagine the scenario the other way around- giving up a life of music for one of tattoo art, Duncan X went from headlining festivals with his band Sheep On Drugs and the top 40 chart to the very bottom, learning the old fashioned way from Dennis Cockle. Duncan's labour was undoubtedly worth it, Mr X tattoos are imbued with the same sense of originality and creativity as his stage shows once were and are surely some of the most interesting and accomplished coming out of the UK today.

I believe that all creativity is the same, regardless of how it manifests. It could result in songs, paintings, tattoos, plays or stories, but they all come from the same place as spokes on an umbrella do, branching out of a central point. So it's little surprise that someone possessing talent in one area may have equal abilities in another.

Tattoos and music sit together particularly well; both are unmediated, pure and personal. They are art forms that touch us directly. So it comes as no surprise that fans of music and fans of tattoos are often one and the same and of course, music is a popular theme in tattoo iconography. As it's not really possible to translate actual music into pictorial form, we find other ways to represent it. Ways including song lyrics, band logos, portraits of singers, pictures of instruments and microphones and popular musical semiotics, like the treble clef. The imagery is varied but the sentiment is consistent.

And if tattoo fans and music fans are the same, it is pleasing to know that some music artists and tattoo artists are also the same. Duncan X's colleague, Tas, plays in Electric Wizard, Jef Whitehead is Leviathan and Thomas Hooper sang for Hardcore band Rainy Day Fuck Parade before leaving the UK for NYC.

And Anthony "Civ" Civarelli from Gorilla Biscuits made the same choice as Duncan X elevating tattooing over music, opening Lotus Tattoo in Long Island. Being in a band, on tour and in studios is erratic and so perhaps best suited to the young. It makes sense that the consistent work ethic of tattooing (often measured in hours) can appeal to someone used to irregular hours. Bands often deteriorate with age, 10th albums fail to stand up to debuts but tattooing grows with its practitioner. Its almost rhythmic that music would be a starting point and tattooing would come later, that the musician eventually picks up another



kind of instrument, a machine, and the unwearied mistress of tattooing eventually triumphs.

Frank Carter of Gallows has been roundly criticized for seemingly turning his back on a fantastic opportunity - tattooing at one of Britain's very best tattoo shops, Frith Street in order to tour with his band and put his energy into his music - but Frank has not rejected tattooing and this situation is not permanent. Instead he guest spots on the road and sporadically returns to his London base. I have no doubt that full time tattooing is waiting patiently for his return.

So the tattooist that leaves the art for music is a definite anomaly.

And that brings me back to the beginning and to Daniel Higgs, whose plane to the UK was late and his spot had to be rescheduled and he became the very last act of the event. At 2.15 am, this white bearded, soft spoken gent took to the far-too-large stage without crew or back up, just a banjo, a shruti box and some ankle bells.

There are few traces of Daniel Higgs' former tattoo life in his folk singer guise but if you look closely you will find letters and symbols on his fingers, animals on his neck, so faded you'd think they were made half a century ago.

It is some years since this man crafted tattoos but the influence of his work can be seen today, bold, flat, idiosyncratic designs that are often imitated but without the Higgs magic, the magic that he has taken to his music. His music is stripped back to its utterly necessary ingredients, like a good western traditional tattoo.

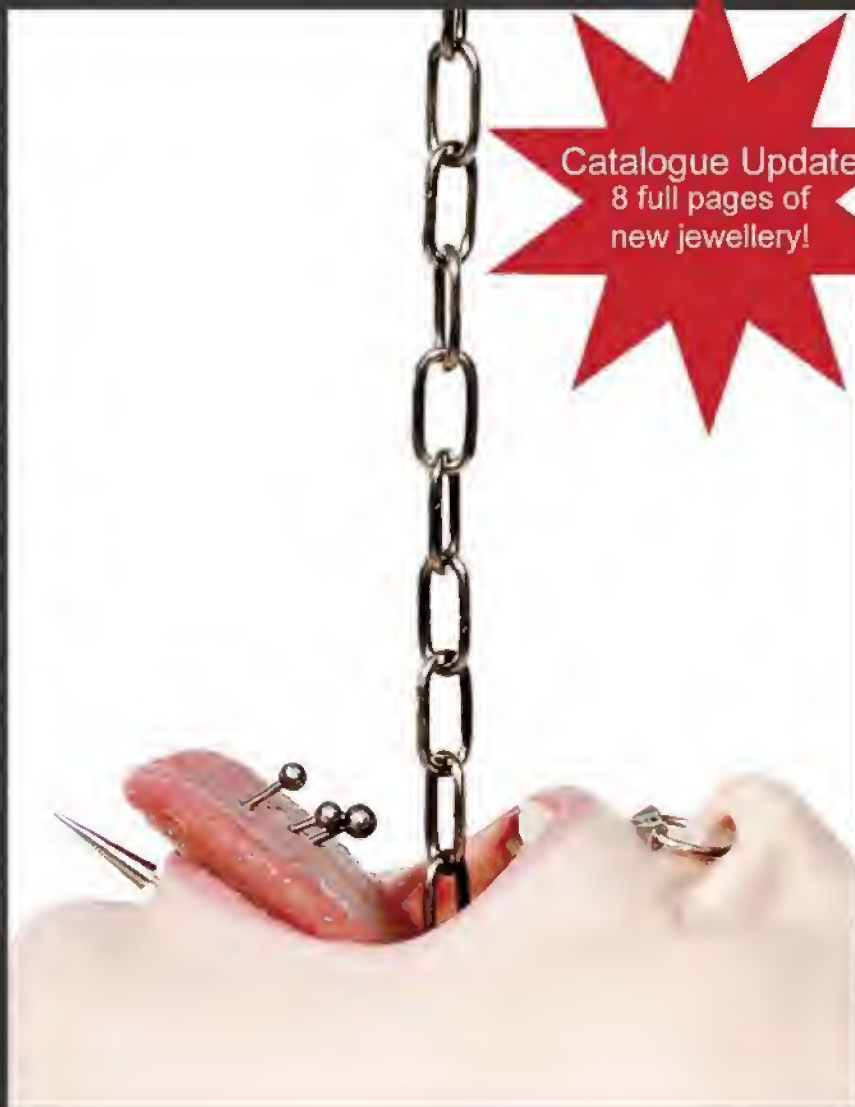
It is not usual for talented tattooists to leave their medium behind, but Daniel Higgs is not usual, he is magic. ★





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